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THE
REASONABLENESS
AND
CERTAINTY
OF THE
Christian Religion.

VOL. II. 12 Lf

Containing, Discourses upon such Subjects as are thought most liable to Objections.

By ROBERT JENKIN, D. D. Lady *Margaret's* Professor of Divinity, and Master of *St. John's* College in *Cambridge*.

The FOURTH EDITION, Corrected, and very much Enlarged.

L O N D O N:

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THE PREFACE.



Here never appeared, I believe, among Christians, so general a Disaffection as in the present Age, to the Christian Religion, in Men pretending at least to Reason, and Learning, and Natural Religion, and Moral Vertue. And tho' I could have little Encouragement to hope, that I should write any thing which might much prevail with Men of these Accomplishments; yet I was perswaded, that so good a Cause, tho' but in weak Hands, could not fail of some Effect upon all that would be at the pains to consider it. And to this purpose, I thought, the best way would be, not to read Lectures, as it were, of Anatomy upon the several Parts of it, and represent it Piece-meal, like a lifeless Carcass, divided and dissected; tho' I had been able to shew never so much Skill in the Operation; but to give an entire View of the Grounds and Reasons of Christianity, the connexion of its Parts between them-

selves, and the Preference which it has to all other Religions; from whence, I knew, it must appear in as true a Light, and with as much Life and Force, as it could do under the Disadvantages, which might be expected from no better a Pen. There is an Excellency in every Part of our Religion separately consider'd, but the strength and vigour of each Part is in the Relation it has to the rest, and the several Parts must be taken altogether, if we would have a true Knowledge, and make a just Estimate of the Whole.

But that which I made my more particular Care, and which, I thought, the more requir'd my Pains, because I had not observed it to be much insisted upon by others, was to shew the Necessity of a Divine Revelation, the insufficiency of Natural Religion, and the Imperfections and Errors of Philosophy, as well as the manifest Falshood of the Religions both of the Heathen and of the Mahometans; and moreover to prove, that besides all other Things requisite to a Divine Revelation, the Religion delivered in the Old and New Testament has received a full Promulgation in all Parts of the World. From these Foundations thus laid and secur'd, we have no less than a Demonstration for the Truth of our Holy Religion.

We are often told by those that are no Friends to our Religion, that we must by all means take great Care of not being deceived through the Prejudices derived from our Education: but I believe it would be found up-
on

on Enquiry, that such Men are so far from being prejudiced in Favour of our Religion, that their Prejudices lie extremely against it. For, besides the Corruption of Humane Nature always inclining to Error and Vice, tho' they had the Principles of Christianity instill'd into them in their tender Years, yet they could learn them then only as confess'd Truths, to be receiv'd for Articles of Faith and Rules of Life. But the first thing probably to which they have set themselves with any Application, was the reading of Heathen Authors, and when perhaps they have studied Philosophy and other Humane Learning for many Years, but never considered Divinity, as a Science, and have searched into it no farther, nor have any other Notion of it, than what they were taught in their Childhood or Youth, they look back upon their first Instructions as groundless, and fit only for Children, because they find little or nothing of them in those Authors, with whom they have been so long conversant, and whom upon many Accounts they have so just Reason to admire. This seems to be the Case of many who have read ancient Heathen Authors, without the Regard, which ought always to be had to That, which is acknowledg'd by All, who have made any due Enquiry into these Things, to be the best Learning and of greatest Antiquity, and is no where to be had but from the Scriptures. Others there are, who have often heard of the Names of *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, and of *Tully*, *Seneca*, and other Famous Writers; they

find them frequently quoted, and commonly with Commendation, seldom to discover any Fault in them, unless it be in their Notions of Natural Philosophy, where Religion seems to be less concerned. They have heard too of the Greek and Latin Historians, and these, for any thing that they know or consider, may be as Faithful and as Ancient as the best.

But tho' all these Authors have indeed very many Excellencies, yet we must not so far mistake, as to think all things Excellent which they deliver. I shall therefore, besides what I have already observed, make some farther Reflections in this place, both upon the History, and upon the Philosophy of Heathen Nations; and then I hope I may be allowed to expostulate with the Adversaries of our Religion, concerning the unreasonableness of their Proceedings, before I come to give a short Account of my present Undertaking.

I. Whatever knowledge almost we have now left of the Antiquities of other Heathen Nations, it comes conveyed down to us by the Greek Authors; and yet there is perhaps no Nation, which generally had a worse Reputation in matters of History, not only by common Fame and the Invectives of Satyrists, but from the Censures of the best Writers, and the Accusations which the Historians made one of another, as ^a *Josephus* shews of many whose Works are now lost. ^b *Thucydides* himself could not

^a Vid. *Joseph. contr. Apion. l. i.*

^b *Thucyd. l. i. c. 20, 21.*

escape

escape free from Censure, who complains of the negligence and unfaithfulness of the other Greek Historians, and he is thought to point particularly at *Herodotus*, whom *Plutarch* exposed in a set Discourse: tho' much indeed has been said in Vindication of *Herodotus*, by *H. Stephens* and *Joac. Camerarius*; and the Discoveries of Modern Travellers confirm many things in his History, which were formerly thought incredible. ^c *Strabo* has observ'd, that the Greeks knew little of the most Famous Nations of *Asia*, except the *Persians*, and that *Homer* knew nothing of the Empire of the *Assyrians* or *Medes*, but that he has omitted the mention of the Magnificence of *Babylon*, *Nineveh*, and *Ecbatane*, tho' he took notice of the *Aegyptian Thebes*, and of the Wealth both of that Place and of *Phœnicia*. ^d *Sallust* suspected that the *Athenians* too highly magnified their own Actions. ^e *Quintilian* compares the Greek Historians to Poets, for the Liberty which they commonly took. ^f *Arrian*, upon the different Account given by *Aristobulus*, and *Ptolemeus Lagi*, of the Death of *Callisthenes*, remarks, that the most credible Historians, who accompanied *Alexander*, disagreed in the relation of things, which were publick, and could not be unknown to them. There is in ^g *Vospiscus* a severe

^c Strab. Geogr. lib. xv.

^d Sallust. Bell. Catilin.

^e *Græcis Historiis plerumque Poetica similis est licentia.* Quint. l. ii. c. 4

^f De Exped. Alex. l. iv.

^g *Neminem Scriptorum, quantum ad Historiam pertinet, non aliquid esse mentitum.* Vopisc. in Aureliano.

Charge against the Historians in general, that there is none of them, who has not falsified in some thing or other, particularly that as to *Livy*, *Sallust*, *Tacitus* and *Trogus Pompeius*, it might be clearly proved upon them. And ^h *Pliny* has furnished us with an instance of great Partiality in the Roman Histories, which conceal that *Porfena* in his League with the People of *Rome*, obliged them to make no use of Iron, but for the Tilling of their Grounds: This, *Pliny* confesses, was an express Article of that League: And how unlike is the *Roman* to the *Jewish* History in this very Instance? For in the Scriptures we find it twice mentioned, that the *Israelites* were reduced to that Condition, that they were permitted to have no Weapons of War, *Judges* v. 8. 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19. But the Roman ⁱ Historians had more regard to the Honour of the Roman Name than to Truth. And it is no Commendation of the same Historians, that they take so little notice of the *Jews*, and say so little to their Advantage, when they do speak of them, since *Josephus* has proved the Leagues between the *Jews* and the *Romans*, and the Privileges granted them by the *Romans*, beyond all Denial, from the Tables then extant wherein they were contained.

^h *In fœdere, quod, expulsis Regibus, Populo Romano dedit Porfena, nominatim comprehensum invenimus, ne ferro, nisi in Agricultura, uterentur.* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxxiv. c. 14.

ⁱ *Tacent id Historici, ut pudendum victori postea Gentium Populo; at Plinius ingenuè fatetur.* Grot. ad 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19.

Dionysius Halicarnassensis differs in many things from *Livy*, and the other Roman Authors. And ^k *Polybius*, contrary to the known Story of the Roman Historians, informs us, that the *Gauls*, after they had been in full Possession of all things, and Masters of *Rome* it self for seven Months, returned home, voluntarily delivering up the City, without any hurt or force from the *Romans*, but with great Spoil: and that the News, that the *Veneti* had invaded their own Country, was the cause of their Return. ^l *Fabius Pictor*, the most ancient Roman Historian, lived in *Hanibal's* time, and wrote, in *Greek*, an Account of the *Carthaginian* War: but ^m *Polybius* says, he differed from *Philinus*, and both were partial; *Philinus* to the *Carthaginians*, and *Fabius* to the *Romans*. But does *Livy* confute *Philinus*, or acknowledge the Partiality of *Fabius*?

ⁿ *Livy* declares, that most of the Monuments of Antiquity, whether publick or private, were destroyed, when the City was burnt by the *Gauls*, and that for this Reason, his History to the rebuilding of the City, near Four hundred Years after it was first built, is but uncertain.

^k Γενόμενοι δὲ καὶ τῇ ὑπαρχόντων ἀπάντων ἐκέρχαις, καὶ τῇ πόλει αὐτῆς μύσας ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς τελευτῶντες, τελευτῶντες ἐθέλοντι καὶ μὴ χάρις αὐτοῖς δόντες τὴν πόλιν, ἄδραστοι καὶ ἀσινεῖς ἔχοντες τὴν ὀφειλάν, εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπανῆλθον. Polyb. l. ii. *Polybius bonus Auctor. in primis.* Cic. de Offic. l. iii. sub fin.

^l Liv. l. i. c. 44. l. xxli. c. 17.

Dion. Halicarn. l. i.

^m Polyb. l. vi.

ⁿ Liv. l. vi. c. 1.

The most ancient Writings, which had any relation to History among the *Romans*, were their Funeral Orations: These were preserved in their several Families, which, as ° *Tully* confesseth, caused their History to be faulty, many things being inserted in this sort of Works, which were never done, false Triumphs, false Consulships, and false Genealogies. The ^p *Annales Maximi* were of good use, but they contained only the first Lines and rough Draughts of History, which appeared quite another thing, when it was filled up, and represented entire, with the Reasons and Circumstances of Affairs, according to the Pleasure or Skill of the Writer. But the Praises ^q of their Ancestors were sung in Verse, at their Banquets, where strict Truth could rarely be heard. The ^r first Publishers of History, in the Latin Tongue, were Poets; *Nevius* wrote the first Punick War in Verse, and was punished for defaming the *Metelli*: After him, *Ennius* wrote his Annals in Eighteen Books, and was in great Favour and Esteem with *Scipio Africanus* and *Scipio Asiaticus*. The Generals of Armies sometimes had ^s their Historians or Poets along with them, whom they liberally rewarded; we may be sure, not for telling when they were beaten. ^t *Atticus*, in

° Cic. Brut. Liv. l. viii. c. 40.

^p Id. de Orat. lib. ii.

^q Id. Brut. Tusc. Q. l. i. c. 2. l. iv. c. 2.

^r Voss. de Hist. Lat. l. i. c. 2.

^s Id. Pro Archia Poeta.

^t *Quoniam quidem concessum est Rhetoribus e mentiri in Historiis, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius.* Id. Brut.

Tully, says, it was a thing of course to relate Matters of History, not according to Truth, but in such a manner, as might best shew the Wit and Eloquence of the Writers. ^u *Tully* lays it down as a known and fundamental Rule of History, that an Historian should dare to say any Truth, but nothing that is false. Yet in an Epistle to *Luceius*, whom he entreats to write the History of his own Ministration of Affairs, he earnestly beseeches ^x *Luceius*, in plain Terms to neglect the Laws of History in his Favour, and to disregard Truth. And as if this had been a thing not unusual, or, at least, warrantable enough; he commends this Epistle in another to *Atticus*, and desires him to promote the Design. It has been remarked by some as a Fate upon *Cicero*, that this Testimony of his Vanity should remain, when the History, of which he was so desirous, is lost, if it was ever written: But who knows how many such Epistles are lost, when the Histories are preserved? ^y *Trebonius* made the like Request to *Cicero*, and *Pliny* wrote in the like manner to *Tacitus*, and both with the same Fate. *Pliny* wrote Instructions of what he desired might be inserted concerning himself, ^z intimating withal, that *Tacitus* would give to every thing a Lustre and Grandeur, exceeding the Truth, and beyond what

^u De Orat. lib. ii.

^x Epist. Famil. lib. v. Epist. 12. Ad Attic. lib. iv. Epist. 6.

^y Cic. Epist. Fam. l. xii.

^z *Hæc utcumque se habent, notiora, clariora, majora tu facies: quanquam non exigo, ut excedas actæ rei modum* Plin. Epist. l. vii. Ep. ult.

he required. This is in common with the Greek and Latin Historians, that they put such Speeches as they think fit, into the Mouths of the several Persons concerned in the Actions they relate, which gives another View and Appearance to the Scene of Affairs, and acquaints us, not what such Persons said or thought, but what the Historian would have spoke, and what Advice he would have given, if he had been in their place. It is strange to see the Difference between ^a *Cæsar's* own Speeches in his Commentaries, and those which *Dion Cassius* makes for him, both in the Circumstances and Reasons of things. But the Historians left their proper Business, and play'd the Orators upon these occasions. And therefore ^b *Diodorus Siculus* found fault with this way of inserting set Orations into Histories, and ^c *Trogus Pompeius* blam'd it particularly in *Livy* and *Sallust*. But *Herodotus* has much of the Simplicity of Ancient times, his Speeches are Natural, containing for the most part but a bare Narrative of what was said or done, only the Persons tell their own Story. But of all the Speeches which are to be met withal in any History, there are none so Natural, or which have such plain Characters of Truth in them, as those in the Scriptures.

The Antiquities of *China* were destroy'd about two hundred years before Christ, and from the several Relations given of that matter by diffe-

^a *Cæsar*. Comment. l. vii. *Dion. Cass.* l. xxxviii.

^b *Diod. Sic.* lib. xx. init. ^c *Just.* l. xxxvi, c. 3.

rent Authors, it appears, that the *Chineses* are rather willing to have it believ'd, that their old Books were in some strange manner or other preserv'd, than that they are able to make it out.

It was the Custom of the *Egyptians* to omit the mention of these Persons, of whom they had any Dislike, or who had made themselves odious to them. Thus in the xxth Dynasty of their Kings, there is a total Vacancy for the space of CLXXVIII Years, which the Learned Mr. Greaves, with great Probability, supplies with the Names of those Kings, who built the Pyramids, two whereof, *Cheops* and *Chephren*, as ^d *Herodotus* says, the *Egyptians*, out of Hatred to them, would not so much as name, but call'd the Pyramids, which they had erected, the Pyramids of *Philiton*, a Shepherd, who in those days fed his Cattle there: The which Hatred, says ^e Mr. Greaves, occasion'd by their Oppressions, as *Diodorus* also mentions, might cause *Manethos* to omit the rest, especially *Sabachus* an *Aethiopian*, and an *Usurper*. But whatever account is to be given of the *Egyptian* History in that particular, this makes the History of that Nation in general very uncertain, and may afford a sufficient Reason, why the *Jews* are either omitted, or misrepresented by Heathen Historians, who had what they relate of them from the *Egyptians*; and the *Hebrews* neither liv'd with the *Egyptians*, nor left them, upon

^d Herod. lib. ii. c. 128.

^e Diodor. Sic. l. i. Greaves Pyramidograph.

such terms, as to have their Story faithfully told by a Nation, who would suffer nothing to pass down to Posterity, if they could help it, that was displeasing to them, when it happen'd, but if any thing were so notorious, as not to be capable of being wholly stifled, they would be sure to vary and deface it with false Circumstances in the Reports, which they gave out concerning it.

And here I must once more complain of Mr. Blount, who, as if he had been an *Ægyptian* Historian, that had an implacable Hatred of our Religion, professing to translate that place of *Tacitus*, which concerns the Original of the *Jews*, cuts his Translation short, and goes no farther than the vilifying and false part of the Account, which *Tacitus* gives; for his Character of their Religion, and the Relation of what *Pompey* discover'd upon his Entrance into the Temple, is omitted. And besides, that which he has translated, is far from being exact: but as I observ'd before, that in speaking of the Ark, he had made Sir Thomas Brown say, that *will not appear feasible*, which the Learned Knight had said, *will appear feasible*; so he has dealt no better with *Tacitus*, making him likewise deny what he had affirm'd: *Tacitus* ^f says, *Hi ritus, quoquo modo inducti, antiquitate defenduntur: These Rites, by what means soever introduced, are defended by their Antiquity.* Which ^g Mr. Blount translates thus: *But by what means*

^f Tacit. Hist. l. v.

^g Oracle of Reason, p. 132.

soever they have been introduc'd, they have no Antiquity for their Patronization. This is to use the History of Tacitus as ill as he doth that of the Bible, and much worse than Tacitus himself has done the Jews. For if it be rightly understood, what Tacitus has written of the Jews proves a very remarkable Vindication of their Religion. He says indeed that they consecrated the Image of an Afs, but he says it only as a Report, which he confutes afterwards himself by acknowledging, that Pompey, when he entred into the Temple, found no Image in it; and giving an Account of their Religion, he says: *Aegyptii pleraque animalia, effigiesque compositas venerantur. Judæi mente solâ, unumque numen intelligunt. Profanos, qui Deum imagines mortalibus materiis, in species Hominum effingunt. Summum illud, æternum, neque mutabile, neque interitum. Igitur nulla simulachra urbibus suis, nedum templis sunt.* Which is so contrary to what this Historian writes before in these words, *Effigiem animalis, quo monstrante, errorem sitimque depulerunt, penetrati sacravere;* that some have charg'd him with contradicting himself: But it is evident, that the Story of their worshipping an Afs, is related as a Tradition, which is afterwards sufficiently confuted by his own Account of their Doctrine and Worship, and by what Pompey found, *Nullâ intus Deum effigie, vacuum sedem, & inania arcana.* Whatever his Design was, and however his obscure way of writing has made him to be misunderstood, there can hardly be any thing said more for the Truth

Truth and Honour of the *Jewish* Religion, than what *Tacitus* has deliver'd of it.

And if any one will compare that which *Tully* hath said in the same ^h Oration of the *Greeks* and of the *Jews*, he must conclude, that what is spoken against the *Jews*, is rather to their Commendation, than to their Disgrace. *Tully* there declares the *Greeks* to be of no Credit nor Esteem, but unfaithful, and of the worst Reputation, even to a Proverb, in their Testimonies and Oaths. He is careful not to involve the *Athenians* and *Lacedæmonians* in the common Scandal, who appear'd for his Client, and gives a high Character of the *Massilians*, and would seem to confine his Discourse to the *Asiatick Greeks*, by whose own Confession, he says, the People of *Phrygia*, *Mysia*, *Caria*, and *Lydia* were proverbially infamous. When he has express'd this Contempt of the *Greeks*, he falls next upon the *Jews*: But what has he to say of them? He calls their Religion a barbarous Superstition, and *Jerusalem* a suspicious and railing City, and he pronounces the *Jewish* Religion to be unsuitable to the Splendor and Gravity, and the Customs of the *Romans*; he insinuates that they were a People not well affected to the *Roman* State, and urges the Conquest of them by *Pompey*, as an Argument against the Truth of their Religion. When so very Learned an Orator had nothing but these common Topicks of Slander to charge them withal, tho'

^h Pro Flacco.

it was for the Interest of his Cause to speak the worst he knew of them; what could be a greater Justification of the *Jews* and their Religion? One of the Accusations laid against *Flaccus*, whose Defence *Tully* had undertaken, was, that Sums of Gold having been wont to be sent out of *Italy*, and out of all the *Roman* Provinces to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, *Flaccus* had forbidden any to be exported from *Asia*. Here it concern'd *Tully* to expose the Worship of the *Jews*, and to vindicate the Prohibition relating to it; but he, who never spoke little upon any Subject, that could afford a Scope for his Eloquence, says so little here to the dispraise of the *Jews* and their Religion, that the Commendation of another had been less to their Honour. It is observable, that *Tully* mentions nothing of their Worshipping an Ass, which was so groundless and foolish a Slander, that it is hard to imagine what could give occasion to it; and perhaps no better Account of it can be assigned, than that the Enemies of their Religion were resolved to fasten the worst and most ridiculous Falshood they could upon it. But if it may be permitted me to add a Conjecture to those which have been made by others, it seems probable, that the highest degree of Excommunication among the *Jews* being styled *Shammatha*, which is the same with *Maran-Atha*, *Sham* signifying Lord, as *Maran* also doth in the *Syriac* and other Languages, and

ⁱ Vid. Grot. & Ham. ad 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Atha, signifying *cometh*; *Atha* might either ignorantly or maliciously be mistaken for *Athon*, which signifies an *Afs*. And it is likely, that this Calumny might be first raised by some body, who had been Excommunicated, and turned Apostate, in *Heliopolis*, or some other part of *Egypt*; for *Apion* was the first that vented it: and the Jewish Temple, in *Heliopolis*, being^k denominated from its Founder, *Onias* the High Priest; that might give some countenance to this pretence, as if it had taken its Name from 'Ονῆ, an *Afs*, and had been from thence called 'Ονείον, as the Temple of *Astaroth* is in the Version of the LXXII. 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. and by^l *Josephus* called 'Ασπερίον; denoting the Images of Sheep, which were worshipped by the *Sidonians* and *Philistines*, as *Buxtorf* observes from *Kimchi*.

But I must here observe, that *Fabricius*, in his *Codex Apochryphus*, imagines me to suppose, that *Shammatha*, or *Maran Atha*, was changed into *Athon*: which indeed is very unlikely, but that *Atha* should, by mistake, or by design, be changed into *Athon*: and *Shammatha*, or *Maran Atha*, into *Maran Athon*, or *Shammathon*, is not improbable for the Reasons alledged.

It would be a very wrong Inference from what has been said, to conclude, that there is no certainty in the Greek and Latin, and other Heathen Historians: For the Circumstances of

^k Προστέταξε τῷ Λάπῳ τὸ ἐν τῇ 'Ονῆ καλέσθαι νεὼν καθελεῖν τὴν Ἰσδαίων. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 3.

^l Antiq. lib. vi. c. ult.

the Relation, and the Consent of divers Authors, may put most parts of History past doubt. But it ought to be considered, that those which have been mentioned, are Exceptions, to which the Sacred Historians are by no means liable; they do not charge one another with Falshood; nothing can be discovered of Partiality in their Writings, but they tell the most disgraceful Truths of their Ancestors, and of themselves; and the History it self has so many publick Circumstances, that they clear it beyond all suspicion of Deceit. If the Names of some Men be omitted, upon particular occasions, in the Scriptures, we find them mentioned there upon others. And there is evident Reason, that the Names of infamous Men should in some Cases be omitted, and should not be inserted in Genealogies, and enrolled in the Registers of Honour. But when the Memory of Persons and Actions is totally suppress'd, this must extremely abate the Credit of any History. The *Jews* are the only People in the World, that have had their Antiquities by an uninterrupted Tradition delivered down and preserved in an Authentick Book, unanimously attested by the whole Nation, in all Ages, which they have never changed nor altered, but have in great numbers sacrificed their Lives in Testimony of it. If the Heathen in divers things contradict the History of the *Jews*, they contradict one another as much in the Accounts of their own Antiquities; and what they relate of the *Jews*, is upon uncertain and contrary Reports. If

a 2

they

they conceal what concerns the *Jews*, it was their Custom to stifle that which did not please them. In the Translation made by the *Jews*, at the command of a King of *Aegypt*, or however, well known, and in constant use in *Aegypt*, nothing relating to the *Aegyptians* is omitted; and *Josephus* has shewn, how little the *Aegyptians* were able to disprove any particular, wherein they found their Nation concerned. The Histories, as well as the Religion of most other Nations, were kept secret, and not communicated to the People; no Book of History among them was ever put into the hands of a whole Nation, with a strict Charge to every one to read and study it, as the Books of *Moses* were, when the principal and most memorable Things related, were within the knowledge and memory of all that read them. The *Jews* were under a necessity of preserving their Genealogies, with all imaginable Care and Exactness, if they would make good the Claim and Title to their Inheritances, so that the meanest among them could with the greatest certainty derive his Line from *Adam*; whereas the *Persian* Kings, as we learn from ^m *Herodotus*, could boast but of a short Descent; and the Kings and Emperors of the *Romans*, and of other Nations, to advance their Pedigrees, were forced to have recourse to fabulous Reports. And the Heathen Accounts of the Original, not only of particular Families, but of

^m Herod. lib. vii. c. ii.

the several Nations of the World, are acknowledged to be Fabulous, or, at the best, but very uncertain, by the most accurate Historians.

The Account of the Prophecies and Miracles contained in the Scriptures, was impossible to be mistaken at first, and it has been transmitted with all the Certainty that any History is capable of, to Posterity. And the Writers of the Old and New Testament all agree in the Account of the Creation, of the Deluge, of *Abraham* and the other Patriarchs, of the Bondage of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt*, their Miraculous Deliverance from thence, and their Journeying into the Land of *Canaan*; they all frequently assert, suppose or imply the Truth of these things; there is a continued Series and Line of Truth observable throughout the whole Scriptures. But among Heathen Writers it is otherwise; they contradict one another in Matters of any considerable Antiquity; if they agree in some material Passages, it is commonly with much variation in the Circumstances, and with great Uncertainty and Doubtfulness; and the things in which they most agree, are such as have been taken from the Scriptures, which compose a Book, that if it were but for the Antiquity and Learning of it, is the most valuable of any Book in the World, and nothing but Vice and Ignorance, and that which is the worst sort of Ignorance, a pretence to Learning, could make it so much despised.

II. If the Histories of Heathen Nations be so little to be rely'd upon, their Philosophy will

appear to be worthy of no more Regard, which, for any thing of Truth and Usefulness there is to be found in it, depends so much upon Historical Traditions. That Poetry is the most antient way of Writing, is not only asserted by Heathen Authors, but may with great probability be made out from the Scripture it self. Poets were the chief Upholders of the Religion and the Philosophy in use among the Heathen; both these were at the first taught in short Maxims, which, that they might be the better receiv'd, and the more easily retain'd in Memory, were put into Verse, without any farther Ornament than just what was necessary to give a clear and full Expression to their Notions and Precepts. ⁿ *Socrates* and the Philosophers of his time had a value for the Verses of *Theognis*; and those which go under the Name of *Pythagoras*, are at least as antient as ^o *Chrysippus*, who alledg'd their Authority. *Solon* himself wrote Elegies, whereof some Remains are still preserv'd. This gave the Poets a mighty Reputation, and we find not only *Solon*, but others of them quoted and appeal'd to by *Demosthenes* and *Æschines* in the Courts of Judicature, as well as by Philosophers in their Discourses. But the Poets for the more delightful Entertainment of the People, not only indulg'd themselves in that antient and useful way of Instruction by Fables (for he ^p was hardly e-

ⁿ Xenoph. Conviv & Memorab. l. i. ^o Apud A. Gell. l. vi. c. 2.
^p Ἐννοήτας ὅτι τ' ποιητῶν θεοί, εἰπότες μέλλοι ποιητῆς εἶναι, ποιῶν
 μύθους, ἀλλ' ἔ' λόγους, Plat. Phæd.

steem'd a Poet, who had been the Author of none) but they became the Promoters of all manner of superstitious and idolatrous Worship*; the Oracles were deliver'd in Verse, every Poet wrote something in honour of the false Gods, and *Socrates* himself, during his Imprisonment, made a Hymn in praise of *Apollo*. By which means the Original Notions of Religion and Vertue were so obscured and corrupted, that it was impossible in any humane way to provide a sufficient Remedy. *Plato* complain'd of the Fictions of Poets; but when he set himself to recover Men to a true Sense and Notion of things by the help of some antient Traditions, which he had met withal, he fell into very absurd and sinful Errors; and both he and *Socrates* practis'd the Idolatries of their Country. They asserted many excellent Truths, which they had receiv'd, as they profess'd, from Antiquity; but whenever they argu'd any Point, they commonly fell into Mistakes, which oftentimes were of very ill Consequence. So weak a thing is Humane Wisdom without the Guidance of Divine Revelation! And of this the Philosophers were so sensible, that divers of them would have it thought, that they had some supernatural Assistance, tho' they were able to bring no sufficient Proof of it.

The Pretences of others deserve no Regard; their Impostures were too notorious to admit of any Denial or Excuse. The Genius of *Socrates*

* *Carminē Dī superi placantur, carminē manes.* Hor. Ep. 1. l. 2.
‡ *Plat. ib.*

may be suppos'd worthy of more Consideration: yet it amounts to no more than this, that *Socrates* declared that a certain Genius had accompany'd him from his Childhood, which often forbad him to do what he had design'd, but never put him upon doing of any thing; and by the Information of this Genius, he often forewarn'd his Friends of the ill Success of what they were about to undertake. But after the best Search I have been able to make concerning this Genius of *Socrates*, I cannot but look upon it as an intricate and perplext Business. ^r *Gassendus* endeavours to prove at large, that it was only an Artifice and Pretence, to gain the greater Credit to his Doctrine. It may suffice in this place to observe, that ^r *Xenophon* acquaints us, that when he advis'd with *Socrates*, whether he should follow *Cyrus* in his Expedition, *Socrates* sent him to the Oracle of *Apollo*, who, he said, was to be consulted in obscure and uncertain Affairs, which affords no very advantageous Character either of *Socrates* himself, or of his Genius. ^r *Tully* informs us, that *Antipater* the Stoick had made a Collection of such things as *Socrates's* Genius had discover'd to him; but whatever they were, it appears that *Tully* had little regard to them. This we are sure of, that all the Philosophy of *Socrates* ended in nothing but Uncertainties: For when he had just before his Death discours'd of

^r In *Epicur. Moral. Philos. Cyri, lib. iii.*

^r *Xenoph. de Expedit. Cic. de Divin. l. i.*

the State after this Life, the most that he could say to his Friends in Conclusion, was, ^u that they had a Noble Prize before them, great Hopes, and a glorious Venture, and therefore ought to possess and charm their Minds with those Thoughts. The Suggestions of his Genius signify'd little to him, if it left him no better instructed, as to a future State, in the last Moments of his Life.

It must be acknowledg'd that *Socrates* made great Improvements in the Moral and useful part of Philosophy: He was of an excellent Understanding, loving and belov'd of honest Men, and had Courage and Resolution enough to bear the Affronts and withstand the Malice of others; he minded none but the practical Doctrines of Philosophy; and tho' he never had travell'd in search after Learning, as it was the Custom in those Ages for Philosophers to do, but scarce ever stirr'd out of *Athens*, yet he knew how to make the best use of the Notions which were brought to him by those, who had been in foreign Countries. It must be confess'd, that if *Plato* had not made *Socrates* the Author of things which he had never said, as not only * *Xenophon*, but *Socrates* himself declared, but had given us as plain an Account of *Socrates*'s Philosophy, as *Arrian* has of that of *Epictetus*, we might have known more of him than we now are able to do. But from what *Plato*

^u Plat. Phæd.

* A. Gell. l. xiv. c. 3. Diog. Laert. in Platon.

and *Xenophon* have said of *Socrates*, we may be assur'd, that he did not refrain from idolatrous Worship, nor reject the Heathen Oracles, nor deliver his own Doctrines, without much Uncertainty and Diffidence.

Plato carry'd his Philosophy to far greater Heights than *Socrates* had done, and the sublimer parts of it were not to be discover'd to the Vulgar; which were so difficult, that he declares to *Dionysius*, that Men of great Abilities, and as great Application and Industry, after the Study of Thirty Years, at last, with much ado, understood them. ^z One of *Plato's* Acquaintance observ'd, that most that apply'd themselves to the Study of his Philosophy, when they were young, could hardly get to understand it in their old Age; which he illustrated by an odd Comparison from a Jest of *Antiphanes*, of Words spoken in a certain City in Winter, that were frozen, and never heard, but upon a Thaw the next Spring. Some things were not to be written at all, or so obscurely as not to be intelligible, if they should fall into the hands of Men, who were not fit to be trusted with the Secret of them; and he acknowledgeth that his best and only sure Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, without the Knowledge of which, all Philosophy can be but of little worth, was from ^a ancient and sacred Tradition. The Notions and Traditions, which *Plato* had brought from other Countries, with his de-

^y Epist. 2.

^z Plutarch. de Profectu Virtut.

^a Epist. 7.

lightful

lightful way of setting them forth, gain'd him great Reputation; some Attempts were made by himself and those of his Sect, to bring his Laws into practice, and to erect a Commonwealth after the Model of them; his Name and Memory washad in great Esteem, his Birth-day was kept, and the Solemnity of it was renew'd about two hundred Years ago, by some of his Admirers, as we are told by ^b *Ficinus*, one of that Society. But there is too much Alloy found in his Philosophy for any Endeavours to gain it a constant and general Reception. His Errors in some Cases are so notoriously gross and scandalous, that ^c *Serranus* sets over against them in the Margin, *Prima insania hominis delirantis*, and *Portentosa insania*.

^d *Aristotle* had study'd twenty Years under *Plato*, but he so often confutes and contradicts his Master, that he has been charg'd with Ingratitude for it. And if *Socrates* and *Plato* did not firmly believe the Soul's Immortality, *Aristotle* believ'd the contrary, as ^e many have prov'd out of several places in his Works. ^f His *Will* shews that he was both in his Practice and Judgment for the Idolatries of his Country. ^g *Aristotle* alledg'd the Obscurity of his Philosophy in excuse to *Alexander*, who was displeas'd, that some of his Books had been made publick; he answer'd, that they were publish'd,

^b Comment. in Conviv. Plat. de Amore, c. 1. ^c Vid. Plat. de Repub. l. v. Serran. Edit. ^d Origen. contra Cels. l. ii. ^e Vid. Jac. Billium in Greg. Nazianz. Or. 33. ^f Diog. Laert. ^g Aul. Gell. l. xx. c. 4.

and not publish'd, because they could not be understood. ^h Which *Avicenna* found to be very true, when he had read *Aristotle's* *Metaphysics* forty times over, and afterwards got them by Heart, and then in Despair of ever apprehending the Sense of them, laid them aside; tho' afterwards, by the help of a Book of *Albumazar Alpharabius*, he persuaded himself, that he understood them. His Books by an Accident lay conceal'd, till a little before they were brought to *Rome*, upon the taking of *Athens* ⁱ by *Sylla*. But they were known to few Philosophers in ^k *Tully's* time. And a Learned Author has given an account, what their Fate has been since.

The Sect of the Stoicks is observ'd by *Josephus* in the account of his own Life, to have been like that of the Pharisees; which ^l *Grotius* says, is no wonder, since in *Cyprus*, which was *Zeno's* Native Country, there were always many *Jews*. But if the Stoicks were at first indebted to the *Jews*, they certainly afterwards borrow'd much more from the Christians. This Sect was very numerous, and had Men of great Note in the Primitive Ages of Christianity, who did not lose the Opportunity offer'd them of improving it. But the Philosophers then began to carry on a Joint-Interest, and those who denominated themselves from any particular Sect, were no longer strict in adhering nicely to its Princi-

^h Pet. Castellan. Vit. illustr. Medic. p. 138.

ⁱ Strabo. lib. xiii. Plut. in Sylla.

^l Grot. ad Matt. xxii. 23.

^k Cic. Topic.

ples. For upon the preaching of the Gospel to the World, the Philosophers thought it concern'd them to review all that had been formerly written, to unite their Forces, and select those Notions out of every Sect, which were most plausible, omitting such as they saw would then give Offence: and it appears that they were greatly beholding to the Religion which they opposed and pretended to despise; it is evident, that they had read the Scriptures, and do sometimes make use of Terms which they had taken from thence, unknown to former Philosophers. ^m *Potamon* of *Alexandria*, Contemporary there with *Philo Judeus*, was the Founder of that which was call'd the *Eclectic Sect*, being a Mixture and Compound of divers sorts of Philosophy. *Sotion*, Master to *Seneca*, was of this Sect, as also *Ammonius* a Christian, whose Scholar *Plutarch* was; ⁿ *Plotinus* likewise adhered to no one Sect, but mixt the *Stoick* and *Peripatetick* Notions with the *Pythagorean* and *Platonick*. But Philosophy, after all their Endeavours, still retaining many Errors, and wanting that Evidence and Authority, which is the Foundation of all true Religion, could never maintain its Ground against that Religion, which was preached by those, whom they contemn'd as ignorant Men; but which in a short time wrought such a Reformation in the World, as the Philosophy of all Ages had been never able to effect.

^m Suid. in *Potam.* Leart. in *Præfat.*

ⁿ *Porphyr.* in *Plotin. vit.*

It is not to be deny'd, that there were many great and eminent Examples among the Heathen, but then there were always as great Enormities allow'd in the most civiliz'd Nations. Philosophy was ° prohibited by three of the Principal States of *Greece*, by the *Thebans*, the *Spartans*, and the *Argives*. And the *Romans*, who have set so many Famous Examples to the World, were little oblig'd to Philosophy: for all their Worth and Greatness was rais'd upon the Stock only of common Notions, the Traditions that they had receiv'd with the rest of Mankind, and the Laws brought from *Athens*, which were enacted by *Solon*, who had been in *Egypt* at a time, when the *Jews* were there in sufficient Numbers. But it was a long while before Philosophers were suffered at *Rome*: they had been ^p expell'd by the Senate: *Tully* was the first that brought Philosophy into any Credit there, and by the Apologies which he often makes for his giving himself to the Study of it, we may perceive under what Prejudices it then lay among the *Romans*, and that there was need of all his Wit and Eloquence to gain it Admission.

A strict Discipline both in Peace and War, great Application and Industry, by which they improved their common Notions, and arriv'd to wonderful Experience and Dexterity in the Management of Affairs, a zealous Love of their Country, and an unparallel'd Constancy, mani-

° Tertul. Apol. c. 47.

p A. Gell. lib. xv. c. 11.

fest in all their Actions, and especially in the Observation of their Laws, rais'd the *Romans* to that mighty Height and Extent of Empire. But that which they retain'd of Truth, in relation to Matters of Religion, had been so abused and disguised with Fabulous Corruptions, that at length it had generally lost all Belief amongst them. ⁹ *Tully* made no Scruple at a publick Tryal in a Court of Judicature, to deny the Punishments of the Wicked in a future State, as a ridiculous Fiction; which shews a strange Corruption of Principles in that Age, when he could propose to himself to gain his Cause by speaking in that manner. In another Oration he says, ^r *Non semper superet vera illa & directa Ratio, vincat aliquando cupiditas, voluptasque rationem.* That this should be spoken in a publick Pleading by one of the Gravest and most Learned of all the *Romans*, shews how little either the Philosophy which he had studied, or the *Roman* Laws themselves could do towards the Establishment of Vertue, and that the Modesty of Youth, and the Vertue and Honour of Families, must be secur'd upon some better Principles. Afterwards he adds: *Verum si quis est, qui etiam meretriciis Amoribus interdictum juventuti putet, est ille quidem valde severus: Negare non possum, sed abhorret non modò ab hujus seculi licentiâ, verum etiam à Majorum consuetudine atque concessis.* I believe there is scarce any Man so far lost to all Shame among

⁹ Pro Cluentio.

^r Pro M. Cælio.

Christians, that he would be willing to hear himself so defended in a Publick Court, or any Judge that would admit of such a Defence: which is a manifest Argument of the Excellency of the Christian Religion, that it lays such a powerful Restraint upon Men. But this looseness of Manners was the fatal Fore-runner of that horrid and monstrous Lewdness, which afterwards, like a Leprosie, overspread the *Roman* Empire. The Conspiracies of that Time, which so much endanger'd the State, were contriv'd by Libertines, and no greater Cruelties have ever been committed than by this Sort of Men, when once they have got into Power; as may be seen in *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Nero*, &c. And *Tully* himself, perhaps, might feel the Effects of these Encouragements to Vice, being kill'd by a Villain, whose Life he had formerly saved by that Eloquence, which was sometimes employ'd, as if he had been retain'd against Vertue.

It must be owned, that *Tully* has in many places of his Works laid down admirable Rules of Vertue, but then it is with little or no regard to such Principles as are the only sure Foundations of a Vertuous Life, *viz.* the Fear of God, and the Expectation of Rewards or Punishments after Death; and such was the defect of his Philosophy, that he could be positive and certain in nothing. *Seneca*, as he professeth, has taken many of his best Precepts from *Epicurus*, which, without a due Consideration had of a God and a Providence, are no
bet-

better than Prudent Cautions against Temporal Evils, either of Body or Mind. *Seneca* many times diverts rather than instructs; what he says is always fine, but not always solid; he dances upon the surface, according to *Quintilian's* Censure of him, but seldom descends to the depth of things; and it were well if that Character, which he has given of *Seneca's* Style, might not be applyed to his Sense, *abundat dulcibus Vitiis*, a luscious Poison sometimes diffuseth it self in his Writings. ^a *Seneca* derides the subtilty and trifling both of *Zeno* and *Chrysippus*; but he did, it seems, think himself more concern'd to expose them for being ill Disputants, than for being Teachers of ill Doctrines: tho' upon this account they were so very scandalous, that ^r *Sextus Empiricus* endeavours to prove from their Words, that there is no real and certain Difference betwixt Vertue and Vice.

The bare knowledge of the Christian Doctrine, even without a sincere Belief of its Authority, has taught Men to abhor those Crimes which were approved of by the Philosophers, and practised in the wisest Heathen Nations: and when things, notoriously Evil, were receiv'd and taught by those, who did and said so many things well, it is evident, that what was good was not owing so much to the strength of their own Reason, as to some higher Princi-

^a Sen. Epist. 82. de Benefic. lib. 1. c. 3, 4.

^r Sext. Empir. Pyrrh. Hypot. lib. 3. c. 24, 25.

ple. I will here give but one Instance, and it shall be concerning the lawfulness of killing Infants, or exposing them to be starved or destroyed. This was the Express Doctrine of ^s *Plato*; and *Aristotle*, who contradicts him in most other things, follows him in this. Indeed, this was so general a Practice, ^t that it is taken particular notice of, that the *Thebans* had a Law to forbid it. ^u *Romulus* made a Law to regulate this Practice, and to hinder it in some Cases. ^x *Tacitus* observes it as a thing deserving his Remark, that this was not practised either by the *Jews* or the *Germans*, tho' the latter had a Custom of casting their Children into the *Rhine* for a tryal of their Legitimacy. But that which is more strange, is, that ^y *Seneca* and *Plutarch*, who liv'd since the Preaching of the Gospel, should approve of such Barbarous Cruelty. ^z *Hierocles*, who, as *Lactantius* informs us, was well acquainted with the Scriptures, was contented to say, that it is natural and answerable to the Ends of Marriage to bring up all, or at least, most Children; which was a great Concession in a Philosopher. *Solon*, who was as Famous for his Philosophy as for his Laws, and the Legislator to that State, which was the Seat and proper Soil, as it were, of Philosophy, by

^s Plat. de Repub. lib. v. Aristot. Polit. lib. vii. c. 16.

^t Ælian. lib. ii. c. 7.

^u Dionys. Halicarn. lib. ii.

^x Tacit. Hist. lib. v. & de Morib. Germ. cum notis Lips.

^y Senec. de Ira, lib. i. c. 15. Plut. in Lycurg.

^z Fragm. apud Stobæ. Serm. 73.

an exprefs Law ^a indemnified all that killed their Children, and the Philosophers were ever true to thefe Principles.

I have infifted upon this the more, not only because it is an evident instance of the insufficiency of Heathen Philosophy, but because some Readers may be as difficult to believe a thing, which must needs feem very Monftrous to Christians, as ^b *Lipsius's* Friend was, to whom he wrote a long Epistle, to convince him that this was the Practice of Heathen Nations, and agreeable to the Judgment of their Philosophers: So that many of the Adversaries of the Christian Faith, may perhaps owe their Lives to that Religion which they Blaspheme.

I have purposely avoided too curious an Enquiry into the Lives of the Philosophers, and rather chose to cast a Veil over what not only their Enemies but their Friends have said of them. The Practice of Men is generally worse than they confess it ought to be; they never live above their Rule and Profession; it is well, if in most things they do not fall much short of it; and if their Principles be bad, what must we expect from their Examples? But the Actions of the Philosophers concerned those with whom they lived, our Business is with their Writings; and I need not fear the Censures of Learned and Judicious Men in any thing I have said of them; for they will acknowledge it to

^a Sext. Empiric. Pyrrh. Hypot. lib. iii. c. 24.

^b Ad Belgas, Cent. i. Epist. 85.

be Truth, and others ought to be told so, that they be no longer willing to change the Bible for the Works of Philosophers, which they commonly read and understand as little as they do the Bible it self.

The utmost that Philosophy could reach, was no farther than to uncertain Hopes and doubtful Arguments. But our Saviour and his Apostles *taught with Authority*, and not as did the Philosophers; *The Words which they spake, they were Spirit, and they were Life*; They came with full Power, and had their Credentials from Heaven to produce, which are the same that we now alledge for the Authority of their Commission. And what can be more certain than plain Matter of Fact, which is clearly prov'd by undeniable Circumstances, and by Witnesses beyond Exception, and which is of that Nature, that all the Divine Attributes are engag'd for the Truth of it? It is strange that Men should pretend to fetch their Infidelity from the Depths of Philosophy, and the *Oracles of Reason*; as if any floating, confus'd Notions, might not serve for Objections. But it is to the advantage of a bad Cause, to involve it in tedious and unnecessary Disputes, to make Digressions into doubtful Points of Criticism and Philosophy, to amuse the Reader, and draw him off from the main Question: Whereas a good Cause may commonly be brought to a clear and short Issue. The present Controversie will admit of all kinds of Learning, but has no need of it. My Business therefore has been to free this Matter,

ter, as much as may be, from all the Intricacies of Learning, to reduce it to plain Circumstances of Fact, whereof every Man may be capable of making a true Judgment, and to bring it to that very Case, in which St. John argues; *He that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son,* 1 John v. 10. But, *he that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true,* 1 John iii. 33.

And how can we forbear to adore the Wisdom and Goodness of God, who, by the wonderful Dispensations of his Providence, has not suffered himself to be *without Witness* in any Age or Nation? If Idolatry spread it self from *Aegypt* into many other Parts of the World, as ^c *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* have shewn, we have the more reason to admire the Wisdom of Divine Providence, in appointing *Aegypt* to be the place where the People of *Israel* did so long sojourn, and where so many signal Miracles were wrought to give a check and stop to Idolatry in the very Source and Fountain of it, if Men had not been beyond all measure obstinate in their Folly and Disobedience.

And the same Goodness of God has not been wanting to any Nation of the World. For, ^d tho' the Law of *Moses* was peculiarly designed
b 3 for

^c Herod. lib. ii. c. 43, &c. Diod. Sic. lib. i.

^d Οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ Ἰσθαίης μόνος ὁ νόμος τῷ, ἀδὲ δι' αὐτῆς μόνος οἱ προφῆται ἐπέμποντο, καὶ ὡσαύτως ἰσθαίων ἐδιώκοντο. πάσης δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἦσαν διδασκαλίον ἱερὸν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τὴν γνῶσιν, καὶ τῇ κτ' ψυχῇ πολιτείας.
St.

for the People of *Israel*, yet provision was made for the receiving of all such as were willing to become partakers of it, to the observation even of their ceremonial and typical Service; none besides the *Israelites* were required to observe it, but neither were any excluded from it. And by the constitution of the *Jewish* Law and Government, as well as by the Providence of God in all his Dispensations towards that People, effectual Care was taken that all the necessary Points of Religion, which concern Mankind in general, should by them be communicated to the rest of the World. But the Christian Religion was, by its original Institution and Design, equally extended to all Nations, and was soon propagated all over the World. Nations but lately known to us, have been constant Objects of the Divine Care, and had early Discoveries made to them of the reveal'd Will of God, as I have proved at large by the Testimonies of Protestants as well as of Papists. And it is very observable, which ^e *Varenius* has remark'd, that the *Jesuits*, in some places at least, have preach'd the Substance of Christianity without the Mixture of many of those Doctrines, which are peculiar to the *Roman* Communion; and he owns that their Success has been very great.

St. Athan. de Incarnatione Verbi Dei. Τῶν γὰρ ἔθνων ἀπάντων τὸ τοῦ ἔθους (Ἰσραὴλ) θεογνωσίας ἔχειροτόνει διδάσκαλοι—δι' ἐνὸς ἔθνους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχοντα φύσιν εἰς τὴν τῆς εὐσεβείας κοινωνίαν ἐκάλει (θεός)—διὰ τῷ ἐνὸς ἔθνους ἅπαντα ἐποδήγει εἰς θεογνωσίαν τὰ ἔθνη. Theodoret. Tom. 4. de Providentiâ Orat. 10.

^e Varen. de Relig. in Regn. Japan. c. v.

III. It

III. It ^f was the Opinion of a converted Mandarin, *That those who had any occasion to hear the Law of God, or to read the Books which treat of it, and did not judge it to be true, wanted Brains, and were void of Understanding.* And it might well be thought incredible, if we did not find it true in Experience, that when Christianity has gain'd so much upon Heathens, and ^g *Turks* have become its Profelytes and Martyrs, even in *Constantinople* it self; it should notwithstanding grow into Contempt among profess'd Christians, who dispute every Article of the Faith into which they were baptized, and every Commandment, which they have undertaken, and solemnly vow'd to obey.

But do they not prove what they pretend? As little of that as may be; but they say it, and say it often and confidently, and perhaps sometimes Wittily, and this must pass for Proof. But do Men love, or will they endure to be talked or jested out of any thing that is dear to them but their Souls? Let the Wit be what they please, or can fancy it to be, certainly they must be much too fond of it, who can be contented to lose not only their best Friend, but Heaven it self for a Jest, which perhaps, after all, would be little taken notice of on another Subject, and has nothing to recommend it but Profaneness, and that alone which should make it abhorr'd, causeth it to be admir'd.

^f Semed. *Hist. of China*, Pt. ii. c. 13.

^g Ricaut. *Hist. of the Ottom. Emp.* l. ii. c. 11, 12.

As there is nothing so bad but some may pretend to speak for it, (as a *Penegyrick* has been written upon *Busiris*, and another upon *Nero*) so nothing is so excellent but it may be spoken against; and if no Right or Title must be allow'd as true or certain, which may be question'd or disputed, it is hard to say what any Man can have that he may call his own. But let it be consider'd that there is little Learning or Judgment required in advancing or maintaining new and strange Doctrines, and in rejecting the old. Things may be so plain, as for that very Reason to be hard to prove, because there is nothing plainer to prove them by. A bold Denial of the Truth of our Senses and Faculties may seem to promise something of more than ordinary Subtilty; tho' there be no more in it than this, that he who resolves to deny the very Grounds and Foundations of all Reasoning, has taken effectual care not to be confuted. It is a Mistake to think that it is easiest to speak upon a common Subject; a Man indeed can never want something to say upon such a Subject, but he is prevented in what he should say, it is known before-hand, and expected from him: The nicest thing of all is to enforce and improve known Arguments, and to give new Life, and a better Genius, as it were, to that which has been said a thousand times before. It is usually easiest to discourse on the wrong side of a Question, because there never is so little scope for Fancy and Invention, as when a Man is confined to strict Truth; Error
will

will admit of all Extravagancies, but Truth is a severe and uniform thing, and there are those whom any Extravagancy almost will please, for the Novelty of it. There may be some Art required to make a known Story delightful in the relating, but News is commonly welcome, tho' it be never so ill told; and the most beautiful and useful Creatures are little regarded, when the worst of Monsters are the more gazed at the more they be deform'd. Let those who make such a Noise with their Singularity, but change the Subject, and try how it will succeed with them, they will soon find the Difference, and perceive that they will cease to be in vogue, when they have no longer the Vanity and Ill-nature, and Vices of Men on their side.

It is with our Minds in this respect, as it is with our Bodies, when once they are well supply'd with all that is necessary or convenient, they begin to loath wholesome Food, and to seek out for Varieties of Luxury, and are fond of any thing that may please them to their Hurt. It is thus in every Art and Science, especially in such as all Men think themselves more or less concern'd to know. Men first were contented to speak so as to be understood, and to express their Meaning plainly and naturally with Truth and Simplicity to one another; afterwards speaking became an Art, and at last in the best and most elegant Languages, it degenerated into nothing but Affectation, and all the Ridiculousness of a false Eloquence. The same thing happen'd in Philosophy; the *Scepticks* carry'd this innovating

vating Humour to the utmost Extravagancy; for the Primitive Traditions being obscured and corrupted, and every Succession of Philosophers striving to set up for themselves, and to outgo each other, they had brought it to that pass, that *Tully*, who knew as well as any Man, says, that nothing can be more absurd than what some of the Philosophers held. But the Author of the *Leviathan* proceeds farther, and observes, that ^h *no Living Creature is subject to the Privilege of Absurdity, but Man only, and of Men, those are of all most subject to it that profess Philosophy.* And if we will not believe him upon his word, he has given us his Example for it; few Men, I think, having written more extravagant things than he has done in every part of Philosophy; if Religion were set aside, he would never have escaped among the Philosophers and Mathematicians of any Age: he disputed the Principles of Geometry, as well as the Foundations of all Religion, and both with a like Success. He calls *Absurdity* the Privilege of Mankind; a strange Privilege! which he has made the most of. But since with a little time the Novelty and Varnish of his odd Opinions are worn off, they are not now, that I have perceiv'd, so much regarded, but have been forced to give way to other Notions which are as bad, and have nothing more to recommend them, but that they are of a later Date and a newer Fashion.

^h *Leviath. Pt. i. c. 5.*

There is little Reason why any one should value himself for talking against receiv'd Doctrines, and persuading others to what they are already but too much inclin'd. But to rescue antient and despis'd Truths, and bring them into Reputation; to convince the Judgments, and gain the Affections of Men; to make the same Truths always please and always appear with a new and amiable Lustre; this is indeed a difficult Task. For a Man to cultivate the Principles of Vertue, and improve the Growth of it, to make every Subject which he treats of, to become the better for him, and to thrive and flourish under his Hands, is an Argument of true Learning and substantial Knowledge; but there is no Skill required to make the Weeds of Vice grow apace; all the Art is in destroying them, and it is a sign of a little Mind when one is able to distinguish himself only by Singularity, by an odd Dress, or a new Mode, when his Wit borders upon Madness and Profaneness, and his Learning is all out of the way. Many who are neither Heterodox in Religion, nor fond of being singular in any thing else, have shewn an extraordinary Sagacity, and a surprizing Variety of excellent Learning upon Subjects which are unusual and in themselves but little considerable. And I will not deny but that some of the Men of Singularity have no worse Design than to gratify a little Vanity, and to appear like Somebody in the *Commonwealth of Learning*, as if Learning were a mere Trifle, a very Play-thing, to be employ'd to no serious

serious and useful purpose, but would serve only to give Men occasion to talk, and to be talk'd of. This is call'd *Pedantry*, and I know not why that should go under a better Name, which is of a worse Nature, and joins the Trifling of *Pedantry* to the Mischief of Irreligion. If this sort of Men would but busy themselves no worse than *Tiberius* did, when he examin'd, who was the Mother of *Hecuba*, what Name *Achilles* went by, whilst he hid himself in Womans Apparell, and what Songs those were, which the *Syrens* were wont to sing; those indeed are profound Enquiries, and so worthy of them, that it were pity they should be disturb'd in such ingenious Disquisitions. But if Men will be for removing Foundations, and rejecting establish'd Doctrines, and denying the Principles of Religion; it is fit they should be told that there is neither Wisdom nor Learning in this; and those who are acted themselves by a Spirit of Contradiction, have the least Reason of any Men to take it amiss to be contradicted, tho' it be in never so plain a manner. In short, it is possible that some may be well skill'd in Tricks and Artifices, who know little of the substantial and useful Part of the Law, and it is certain, that many who talk boldly of the highest Points of Religion, are ignorant even of the *Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*. There surely can be little need for any Man to have recourse to Error and Extravagancy for the Exercise and Improvement of his Faculties; they must be strange Faculties to want such Improvement.

Truth

Truth it self is infinite, tho' always uniform and consistent in every part, and will afford room enough for the free use of Reason, in examining and considering the Nature of things, in stating particular Cases by general Rules, in the Study of Antiquity, and in explaining particular Texts of Scriptures, according to the Analogy of Faith, and the Tenour of sound Doctrine. And it may justly be look'd upon as a Defect of Judgment and good Sense, or be suspected (which is much worse) of want of Sincerity and a good Conscience, when Men can find nothing, by which they may recommend themselves to the World, but by setting up for Novelties in Religion. For what Man of an honest Meaning, and of sufficient Abilities and Strength of Parts, to proceed securely in direct and approved Paths, would run out of the way by Cunning and Artifice, to steal a despicable Reputation, which another would be ashamed of, and of which the best thing that can be said, is, that, as it is never worth the having, so it is never lasting.

After the Reception and Establishment of the Gospel for so many Ages, we are call'd upon to prove the Grounds and Principles of our Religion all over again, and we will never decline a thing so easy to be done. But the Modern Infidels have chang'd the State of the Question: the Truth of the Miracles wrought by our Saviour and his Disciples was never deny'd by the Adversaries of Christianity of old; this was not disputed by *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and *Ju-
lian*

lian the Apostate ; if some of them did upon any occasion insinuate the contrary , that was so malicious and groundless a Calumny , that they were neither able to insist upon any Proof of it , nor to reconcile it to what they themselves had elsewhere said. The Matter of Fact was acknowledg'd by the antient *Jews*, and has been confess'd by their Posterity ; they could not contradict the Miracles, but deny'd the Consequence of them : though the Men we have to deal withal , to make clear work, with much Confidence, but with as much Ignorance, deny both. Let them know then, that they are in part confuted by the Enemies of our Religion ; and it were strange if its Friends should fail in the other part.

IV. I have here endeavoured to do some Right to our Religion , and to satisfy all such as are willing to be satisfied in the most difficult Points of it. And tho' I have discoursed at large upon the Subjects of which I treat, and not in the usual Method of *Objection* and *Answer* ; yet I have always had my Eye upon the Objections, which I have known, that I could think at all material. But to bring in Objections at every Turn in plain Discourses , such as these were design'd to be, as far as the Matter would permit, might have been of no good Consequence. A Man may very well be guided in the right Road, without having all the wrong and dangerous Paths describ'd to him ; and he may be directed how to recover or preserve his Health, without being presented with
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a Catalogue of Diseases; he may get safe to his Journey's end, without knowing all the Bogs and Precipices by which he might have miscarried; and in order to be well, there is no need that he should be acquainted how many ways there are of being sick. I have heard of some that read Objections without the Answers; as lately a shameless Writer has produced the Objections of *Celsus* and *Faustus*, against the Canon of Scripture, without taking Notice of the Answers given by *Origen* and *St. Austin*, from whom he had them. And tho' both the Objections and Answers should be read, yet Objections are commonly in few Words, and are often remembered, when the Answers are forgotten. And indeed, tho' I were never so expert at it, I have no Ambition to try my Strength in tying a knot, that I may shew my Skill in unloosing it. But to provide against all Exceptions, as much as it is possible, I have proved at large, that if all Objections could not be answered, this would be no sufficient Reason to reject or question the Authority of our Religion.

I cannot say, I must confess, that I have been able, or have been much solicitous to obviate all the Cavils which may have been started, many have been given up, and others seem never to have been seriously urged. An Author who had more Learning it seems, than Judgment to spare, wrote a Book, to prove that there were Men before *Adam*; but this was rejected by Judicious Men, as a very absurd and ridiculous Conceit, particularly by *Grotius*, as the Author

com-

complains, who yet afterwards retracted it himself. Some, notwithstanding, are so fond of any Paradox, that they are still for maintaining it. I confess, it agrees admirably with a Tradition of the *Arcadians*, that their Ancestors were before the Moon; and if any Man should pretend, that this might very well be true, according to the *Cartesian Hypothesis*, by attempting to prove, that *Arcadia* might be inhabited before the Moon, of a Luminous, became an *Opake* Body; in so curious an Age, he must have ill Luck if he should want his Applauders. If some object, that the Originals of the Books of Scripture in the Hand-writing of the several Authors, are not still remaining; doth this deserve to be answered, till they can produce the Original Writings of all other Books? or at least of all or any that are as ancient, as even the last written of the Books of the New Testament? Would they have an Office erected, to prove the Titles to all Estates by Original *Deeds*? and upon what Period of Time will they fix for the Date of them, which will admit of any Comparison with the Date of the Manuscript Copies now extant of the Scripture? It has been objected against the History of the Flood, that *America* is divided from all the rest of the World by the Ocean, and that divers Beasts are found there of a different Species from any known in other Parts of the World, which therefore cannot be of any of those Kinds contained in the Ark. But this Objection deserves no Answer, till those that make it,

it, can give an Account of all the Species of Animals in the World, and an exact Description of the Limits of *North America*, and how it borders upon the Sea, or the adjacent Continent. In the mean time, are not Elephants Natives only of *India*, and of some parts of *Africa*? And are not divers other Animals peculiar to some Countries, and not the natural Breed of other Places on the same Continent?

It is as vain to object, that the Negroes are not descended from *Noah*, unless the Arguments could be confuted, by which it is prov'd, that *Africa* was peopled from *Cham*. *Ægypt* is the Land of *Cham*, (Psal. cv. 23, 27.) or *Ham*, the Jupiter *Hammon*:^k *St. Jerom* Witnesses, that it was called *Ham* in the *Ægyptian* Tongue in his time.ⁱ *Chemmis* was a great City of *Thebais*, and the Inhabitants were call'd *Chemmites*, or *Chammites*.^m *Pliny* says, that *Æthiopia* was denominated from *Æthiops*, the Son of *Vulcan*: which were reasonable to believe, if it could be proved, that there ever was such a Man. And there is the same Reason to think, that the *Æthiopians* are descended from *Cham*, since his Name carries it in the same importance with *Æthiops*: For *Cham* signifies *Hot*, and *Chum*

ⁱ Subjicio Magonem & Dionysium scribere mulam & equam, cum conceperint, duodecimo mense parere. Quare non, si hic in Italiâ cum peperit mula, sit Portentum, adsentiri omnes terras. Neque enim Hirundines & Ciconie, quæ in Italiâ pariunt, in omnibus terris pariunt. Non scitis Palmas cariotas in Syriâ parere, invecas in Italiam non parere? Varro de Re Rusticâ, l. ii. c. i.

^k Tradit. Hebræ. in Genes.

^l Herod. li. ii. c. 19.

^m Plin. l. vi. c. 30.

Black, from *Chamam*, to be *Hot*. ⁿ *Eupolemus* delivers it as a Tradition among the *Babylonians*, that *Chum* was the Father of the *Æthiopians*, whom, by mistake, he makes the Son of *Chanaan* the Father of the *Phœnicians*, and the Brother of *Misraim*, (or *Mizraim*; in the *Septuagint* Version, *Mefrain*, and *Mefraim*;) the Father of the *Ægyptians*: But he says, that *Chum* was, by the *Greeks*, called *Asbolus*; that is, *Soot*, *Blackness*; and ^o *Chemia*, the ancient Name of *Ægypt*, signified *Blackness*. *Ægypt*, in the Old Testament, has its Name from *Mizraim*, the Son of *Cham*, and *Æthiopia* from *Cush*, another of his Sons: Can the *Æthiopian* (the *Cushite*) change his Skin? (*Jer. xiii. 23.*) And these *Cushites* or *Æthiopians* were far spread, and are divided into ^p *Eastern* and *Western* by *Homer*, who is followed therein by *Strabo* and *Pliny*. From all which it appears, that the People of *Africa* were originally descended from *Cham*, and that their Colour was always the same. And it may be considered, that if the Hairiness of *Esau* had descended to his Posterity, it would have distinguished them as much from other Men as those of *Cham's* Posterity are distinguish'd by their *Blackness*. Some have alledged, that the Sea, through which the *Israelites* passed, is not Red: But they may be pleased to know, that Religion is nothing concerned in what has been written

ⁿ Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. ix. c. 17.

^o Plut. de Isid. & Osir.

^p Odyss. æ. v. 24. Plin. l. x. c. 8. l. viii. c. 32. Strab. l. i.

on both sides upon this subject; for it is not called the *Red Sea* in the *Hebrew*, but the *Sea of Weeds*, with which it abounds. It has the denomination of the *Red Sea* from the *Greeks*, however it came by it, (for the Criticks are not agreed about it) and is best known by that Name, which is therefore made use of by the *Septuagint*, and in our own and other Translations, which herein follow St. *Luke* and the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, Men must call things by known Names if they will be understood, whatever gave the first occasion to those Names. As to many Objections, let Men but do *Moses* the same Right, which they would do *Thucydides* or *Tacitus*, and we need desire no more, tho' they should not allow for the great distance of Time between them: Indeed, they might live in the same Age, for all that many of these Objectors know, and be next Neighbours. I have known divers Objections made, which the looking only into the Bible would answer, and many proceed from the want of being conversant in it. Some have supposed, that they had great matter of Objection from Christ's Cursing the Fig-tree, and causing it to wither away: But never so little Reflection might serve any one to take notice, how merciful a thing it was in the Son of God, and how suitable to the Gospel which he preach'd, for him to shew his Power of punishment upon a Tree rather than upon a Man: It was then, and is at any time as easie for him to punish his Revilers, as it was to Curse this Tree, or as it can be for them to Revile him,

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tho' they be never so ready at it. But to manifest himself to be the Saviour, not the Destroyer of Mankind; He Cured all manner of Diseases, and raised the Dead; but never took away the Life of any Man, nor inflicted any Disease: He spared his worst Enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, and punished their Hypocrisie in the Emblem only of a Fig-tree flourishing in Leaves before the Time and Season of Figs, and thereby promising very much and early Fruit, but having none; it made a shew of Figs out of Season, but had nothing to answer so fair an Appearance. This is the Parable of the Fig-tree represented in Fact, which we find express'd in Words, *Luke xiii. 6.* and denoted the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, whither our Saviour was then going, for its Unfruitfulness and Hypocrisie, *Matth. xxi. 18.*

Other Objections, which may seem more considerable, have been confuted even to a Demonstration. Cavils which have been raised concerning the ^q Quantity of Space, which will be required to contain the Bodies of all Men at the Resurrection, and concerning the ^r Bottomless Pit, have been demonstrated to be frivolous. That the ^s Capacity of the Ark was sufficient to contain *Noah* and his Family with the Beasts and Food for them; and that the ^t Increase of Mankind might extend to so great

^q Tacquet. Geometr. Pract. lib. iii. c. 20. Probl. 2.

^r Sir Sam. Morland's *Urim of Consc.* p. 95.

^s Buteo de Arca Noe. Kircher de Arc. Noe. Sir W. Rawleigh's *Hist.* lib. i. c. 7. §. 9. Bishop Wilkin's *Real Character*, Pt. 2. c. 5.

^t Petav. Doctr. Temp. l. ix. c. 14.

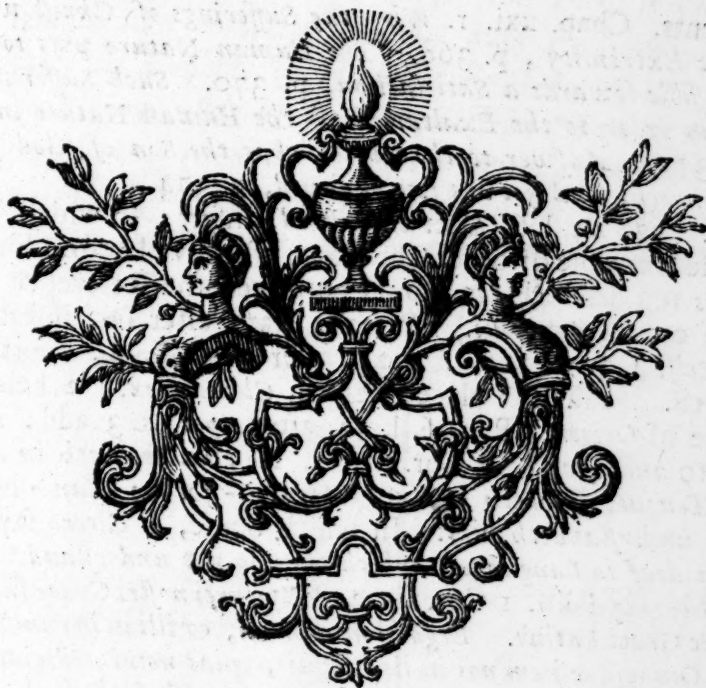
Numbers in no longer a Compass of Years than the Scriptures in any Instance assign, are things which have been often prov'd beyond any possibility of a Confutation; and what ever force there may seem to be in Objections of this nature, they are to be reckon'd among the *Vulgar Errors*, and in that Number Sir *Thomas Brown* has placed some of them, for Learned Men have been long ago asham'd to make them; and this, one would think, should cause others to be more modest and cautious in their Objections against the Scriptures, when such as have the Appearance of the greatest Strength in them, being once brought under strict Examination prove to be evidently false. And if they find they have been mistaken and are willing to be undeceiv'd; this will go so far towards their Conviction, that I cannot but hope that the Considerations here propos'd, may be of some weight with them.

Thus far, methinks, at least, I may hope to prevail upon those who will not be convinced of the Truth of the Christian Religion, that they will no longer imagine it safe or prudent to speak lightly or profanely of it. Religion is too serious a thing, and of too great Concernment to Mankind, to be expos'd to the Scorn of every one, that thinks he can make a Jest. And that which is too hard for their Reason, will be in little danger of their Raillery, but will rather receive an additional Confirmation from it. The best and most sacred things are always most capable of Dishonour and Affronts; for to af-

front and abuse any Person or Thing, is to endeavour to make it appear bad, and it is the Security of some things and some Men, that they cannot be represented worse than they are. It is in any one's Power to affront the greatest Prince, and a Man of the most eminent Vertue may be most easily abused; but no Treason can be spoke against a Beggar, and it is the hardest matter to find out how to disgrace him of whom nothing can be said worse than he deserves. It is a kind of Testimony given to Religion, and an Acknowledgment paid to Vertue, when Men so industriously labour to vilify it. For how can that be disparag'd which is of no Worth or Excellency? Or why should Men endeavour to bring that into Discredit, which hath not at present a confess'd Reputation? Whether this be a deserv'd Reputation or no, they may question if they think fit, but then let them make it a serious Question, and not to be decided by the loudest noise. But here is the Mischief, they have no Patience to attend to the Force of an Argument, or to go on with a Dispute; but a Cavil is soon started, and Objections are more easily rais'd than answer'd upon any Subject, and then they trample with wonderful Scorn, and triumph upon that which they conceive is so miserably overcome: but alas the Victory is over themselves; nothing is either the more or the less true for their believing or disbelieving it, and Religion is always the same, how profanely soever it may be spoken of.

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We have no design to impose upon any Man's Faith; but if there be Reason in what we say, it may well be expected from Reasonable Men, that they should hearken to Reason. Religion is Reason and Philosophy, as the Fathers often speak, the best and truest Philosophy. And I am persuaded, how much soever I may have fail'd in the Performance, that the Christian Religion is capable of being prov'd with such clear and full Evidence, even to ordinary Understandings, as to make all Pretences of arguing against it appear to be as ridiculous as they are impious.



ERRATA.

PAge 16. l. 2. r. *its own*. p. 18. l. 14. r. *Original*. p. 20. l. 25. r. *or*. p. 34. Marg. l. 1. r. *Indutiomorum*. p. 45. l. 4. r. *shall be*. p. 49. Marg. l. 7. r. *ex Scripto*. p. 50. Marg. l. 6. r. *αἰθαλόεσσαν*. l. 7. r. *ἡγούμεν*. l. 10. r. *δαίμων*. p. 63. Marg. l. ult. r. *εἰς γνώσιν*. p. 75. Marg. l. ult. r. *old* & r. v. 788. p. 98. Marg. l. 4. r. *lost*. p. 100. Marg. l. 6. r. *Γεδάζε*. p. 107. l. 14. r. *oldest*. l. 20. *dele of*. p. 110. Marg. l. 3. r. *Dardan*. p. 111. Marg. l. 12. r. *Arcthas*. p. 112. l. 12. r. *Revelation*. p. 113. Marg. l. 5. r. *& fals*. p. 115. l. 11. r. *there were*. p. 126. Marg. l. 11. r. *Questio*. p. 131. Marg. l. 2. r. *Judaicum*. p. 142. Marg. l. 4. r. *Exemplar*. p. 157. Marg. l. 1. r. 220. l. 6. r. *Proem*. p. 158. l. 25. r. *Methuselah*. p. 176. l. 6. r. *unreasonable*. p. 178. l. 8. r. *their*. p. 206. l. 12. r. *finire*. p. 208. Marg. r. *Mitzalotai*. p. 211. Marg. l. 1. r. *Eg*. p. 245. Marg. r. *διὰ τῆς*. p. 293. l. 5. r. *and*. p. 302. l. 4. r. *at its first*. p. 306. l. 12. r. *Lectio sc.* l. 25. r. *Quapropter*. p. 307. Marg. l. 6. *dele* * *Defensio verit. Hebraic*. p. 329. l. 19. r. *that is*. p. 347. l. 24. f. *But*, r. *For*. p. 353. l. 5. r. *Human*. p. 371. l. 23. r. *of their*. p. 375. Marg. r. *Dr. Halley's*. p. 376. l. 8. r. *That was*. p. 385. Marg. r. *B. 25*. p. 401. l. 14. r. *usual*. p. 427. l. 23. f. *Beings*, r. *Agents*. p. 461. Marg. r. *sceleratum. Et si*. p. 467. l. 27. r. *was at*. p. 491. l. 36. r. *themselves*. p. 504. l. 20. r. *was by*. l. 33. r. *Vice*. p. 507. Marg. l. 5. f. *posset*, r. *putet*.

ADDENDA.

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Book. Page 44. l. 6. after *understood*, insert; In which he followed the Example of other Christians, who lived before him, as *Arnobius* testifies. (Here should be placed the Reference to the Citation out of *Arnobius*.) P. 126. Marg. after *ἐν*, insert. *Orig. contra Cels.* l. 3. p. 117. P. 128. after *παρεδόχαι*, insert. *Orig. ib.* p. 118. [and the * placed before, *Clem. Alex.* l. 2. belongs to this page of *Origen*.] P. 196. l. 33. after *Apoc. x. 3.* add; And to hear is to understand, 1 Cor. xiv. 2. *He that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, speaketh not unto Men----* for no Man ^a heareth, that is, *understandeth him*. In which Sense, ^b *Cicero* says, *All Men are deaf to Languages, which they do not understand*.

^a *Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει*. 1 Cor. xiv. 2. ^b *Epicurei nostri Gracè fari nesciunt, nec Graci Latine. Ergò hi in illorum, & illi in horum Sermone surdi: Omnesque item nos in iis Linguis, quas non intelligimus, quæ sunt innumerabiles, surdi profectò sumus.* Cic. Tusc. Disp. l. 5. c. 40.

Page 254. l. 18. after *of it*, add; *Abiathar*, when he became worthy of Death, is styled, *a Man of Death*. For so *Solomon* calls him, *Thou art a Man of Death; but I will not at this time put thee to Death*, 1 Kings ii. 26. And thus *Adam* by his Transgression became a *Man of Death*, tho' he was not actually put to Death.

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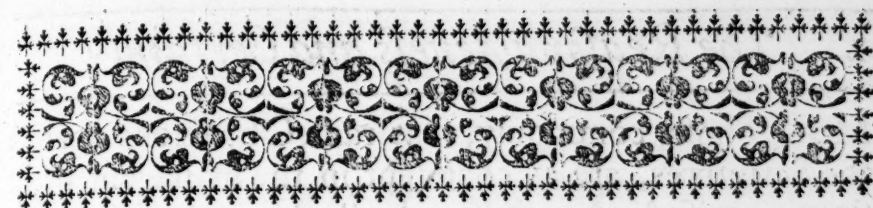
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THE
REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY
OF THE
Christian Religion.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Of Human Reason.



HAVING in the former Book proved the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, I proceed in this to clear such Points, as are commonly thought most liable to exception in the Christian Religion, and to propose some Considerations which may serve to remove such Prejudices, and obviate such Cavils, as are usually raised against the Holy Scriptures. But before Men venture upon making Objections against the Scriptures, they would do well, first, to consider the compass and strength of their own Parts and Faculties, and to observe in how many things they daily find themselves deceived; how many Men there are who understand much more than themselves, and how much folly and ignorance there is in the wisest

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Men.

2 *The Reasonableness and Certainty*

Men. Those, commonly, that raise Objections against the Scriptures, are as confident in the management of them, as if they understood all things besides, and therefore conclude, that must needs be false, which they do not understand; not considering, how very reasonable it is to suppose, that God should command and reveal many things, the Natures and Reasons of which we may not be able to comprehend. This must be granted by every Man who believes God to be infinitely wise, but doth not think himself to be so, and acknowledgeth God's Sovereignty over him. For, as he is infinitely Wise, he may reveal things above our Capacities; and as he is the Supreme Lord and Governor of the World, he may command us what in his infinite Wisdom he shall see fitting, tho' we may not perceive the Reason and Design of it. And yet this is the utmost, that, upon a due Examination, many of the Objections against the Authority of the Scriptures amount to, that there are several things in them, of which some Men think no clear account can be given, and others, which seem to them unworthy of God.

Now, what is the meaning of this way of objecting? And where lies the force of such Arguments but in this, that it is not to be conceived, that God would reveal or command any thing, with which they are not satisfied, or which they cannot perfectly understand? This is all the strength of this sort of Objections. There is all the reason in the world to believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, if they did not contain things, which these Men, in their great wisdom, think should not be there, if they were his Word; which is to make their own Understanding the measure and *Criterion* of Divine Revelation. And some have turned Scepticks, for as good Reasons; and others have been Atheists, upon the same Principles; finding as much fault with the System of the World, and the Order and Contrivance of the Parts of it, as

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the Deist doth with the Scriptures; they have renounced all Belief of a God, upon the same grounds upon which he disbelieves the Christian Religion. To convince Men therefore of the Narrowness and Weakness of Human Reason, I shall shew, I. That in some things, each side of a Contradiction seems to be demonstrable. II. That every Man believes and experiences several things, which, in the Theory and Speculative Notion of them, would seem as incredible as any thing in the Scriptures can be supposed to be. III. That those who reject the Mysteries of Religion, must believe things much more incredible.

I. In some things, each side of a Contradiction seems to us demonstrable. Several Instances might be given of this: I shall instance only in the divisibility of Matter. Nothing seems more evident, than that divisibility is essential to Matter, and that therefore all Matter is divisible, so that the least part of Matter is as divisible as the biggest, because the least particle of Matter is Matter, that is, it is of the same Nature and Essence with the whole: and all Matter differs only in Bulk, or Figure, or Place, or Rest, or Motion. It being then of the Nature of Matter to be divisible, it must ever be divisible, tho' it be never so often divided; since it can never be so divided, as to lose its own Nature, or cease to be Matter. On the other side, it is demonstrable, that Matter cannot be infinitely divisible; because, whatever is divisible, is divisible into Parts; and no Parts can be infinite, because no Number can be so. For all Number is necessarily in it self capable of being counted or numbred, tho' no finite being may be able to number it; a numberless Number is a contradiction, it is a Number which is no Number: therefore all Number must be even or odd; and must be capable of addition and subtraction; which is contrary to the Nature of Infinite. For what is less or greater, has certain bounds or limits, and therefore cannot be infinite, or with-

out any end or bounds. Matter therefore cannot be divisible *in Infinitum*, since all Division is into Parts, and all Parts are capable of being numbred, that is, they are more or fewer, even or odd. It will not suffice, to say, that Matter can never actually be divided into infinite Parts, tho' it be capable of infinite Division, so as that there can be no end of its divisibility. For the Parts into which it is divisible, must be actually existent, tho' not actually divided: For nothing can be divisible into Parts which it hath not; and all Parts actually existent, whether they be divided, or only divisible, are capable of being numbred, or must have a determinate Number, and therefore cannot be infinite. But to say that these Parts of Matter are indefinite, but not infinite, is only to confess, that we know not what to say of them: for they are indefinite in respect to us, not in their own Nature; we cannot determine their Number, or what end there can be of dividing them; but this is an argument of our own ignorance, and proves nothing as to the nature of the thing.

Again: Nothing is clearer to every Understanding, than that all the Parts into which the Whole is divided, being taken together, are equal to the Whole: yet it seems many ways demonstrable, that any single Part is equal to the Whole. I shall give but one such Proof of this, as may be most obvious. It must be granted, that in any Circle a Line may be drawn from every Point of the Circumference to the Centre: Suppose then the Circle to be the *Æquator*, or a Line drawn round the Globe of the Earth, and that ten thousand lesser Circles are drawn within the *Æquator* round the same Centre, and that a Right Line is drawn from every Point of the *Æquator* to the Centre of the Globe; every such Right Line drawn from the *Æquator* to the Centre, must of necessity cut through the ten thousand lesser Circles drawn about the same Centre, and consequently there must be the same number of Points

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in a Circle ten thousand times less than the *Æquator*, that there is in the *Æquator* it self. And because there may be a Circle drawn from any point of the Diameter, the lesser Circles may be multiply'd to as many as there are points in the Diameter, which are innumerable, and therefore the least Circle imaginable may by this Demonstration have as many points as the greatest, that is, it may be as big as the greatest, or as big as one never so many thousand times bigger than it self. For all the Lines drawn from the utmost Circumference, terminate in the Center, which proves that the Center, or the least Circle imaginable Immediately next to it, must be equal to the Circumference never so much bigger than it. For to answer, that the lesser Circles have as many points, but not so big as the greatest, is against the Supposition, because I suppose a Line drawn from every one of the least points of the greatest Circle, through the least Circle to the Center, and the least points in the greatest Circle must be as small as any in the least Circle, there being nothing in the nature of Circles or Points to hinder it, and every Line passing from the Circumference to the Center, is supposed to be of the same bigness in all its parts, and therefore all the Points of Intersection must be equal with those in the Circumference.

This proves, that we may lose our selves in the Speculation of Material things: for when we once abstract them from Sense, and consider them in the Theory, they become inexplicable: Because our Faculties were never design'd for such Speculations, and are not made for them, nor are capable of them, at least in this mortal state. But this is no Argument, that our Senses rightly dispos'd, and in due Circumstances, may deceive us in things, which are the Objects of Sense, or that we may be deceiv'd in trusting to them. Because what is the Object of Sense, is the proper Object for us to judge of by Notions deriv'd

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from our Senses, or by the Informations which we receive from them. Our Faculties were design'd not for mere Speculation and Curiosity about matters, which perhaps it is impossible for us Creatures fully to comprehend, but for our Use and Welfare : they were design'd to prevent our being deceiv'd in things which are the Objects of Sense ; and therefore all the Absurdities, which are charged upon the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, are truly urged, because they are concerning an Object of Sense ; and all such Maxims, as *the Part is less than the Whole*, &c. must hold true, when they are apply'd to Objects of Sense, tho' it be past our Understandings to conceive, how they should be applicable to things, which do not fall under the Perception of our Senses ; for these Notions were implanted in us, to guide and direct us in the Course of this Life ; and we must rely upon them, when they are apply'd only to their proper Objects, rather than upon any Speculations, which are too nice and high for our Conceptions. And it is as absurd to believe what contradicts our Senses in an Object of Sense, as to extend these Maxims to Objects which are insensible, and only in Idea.

The seeming Demonstration of these, and such like Contradictions, arises from the applying of the Maxims taken from Physical and Material things, to Mathematical Ideas, which are in the Mind only, and have no Existence in the Nature of things. And the same Absurdities, may be started upon any other Subject, by confounding the several Notions and Properties of things of different Natures. That the Whole is greater than Part of it, is a Physical Axiom, and obvious to Sense ; but that Lines are form'd by indivisible Points, is purely Mathematical Speculation, and the Work of Reason. So again, that Matter is divisible, is an Object of Sense ; but, that Divisibility is inseparable from Matter, is mere Speculation, and a Deduction which is made from Sense ; of which our
Senses

Senses can give us no Assurance, but that our Reason may be mistaken in it. And whenever we pass the proper Bounds of each Faculty, and judge of the Difficulties concerning the Objects belonging to one Faculty, by abstracted Notions belonging to another, we must necessarily fall into Error and Confusion. And therefore this must needs happen, when we reason about Objects, which we know only by Revelation, and which are the Natural and Proper Objects of none of our Faculties.

There are proper Notions and Maxims, which belong to the several Natures and Kinds of things, and these must of necessity fail us, when they are used about things of another Nature. Thus if a Man should judge of Sounds by his Ideas of Colours, or of Colours by his Notions of Sounds, he might multiply Contradictions without end: and yet these are not more different, than sensible Objects are from insensible, and material from immaterial. God may see it fitting to reveal such things to us, as are above our Understandings, but then we must be contented to take his Word for the Truth of them, and not apply our Principles and Maxims taken from things of an inferior Nature, to things of which we can have no Conception but from Revelation: which would be as absurd, as for a deaf Man to apply the Notion which he has of Colours to Sounds; or for a blind Man to fancy, that there is no such thing as Colours, because he is told they cannot be heard.

And there must be a due proportion between the Faculty and its Object. For the Faculties both of our Bodies and Minds are confined and limited in their Exercise about their several Objects. The Parts of Matter may be too small and fine to be any longer discern'd or perceiv'd by Sense. For only Bodies which are so big as to reflect a due Quantity of Rays to the Eye, can be perceiv'd by the Sight it self, the quickest and subtlest of all our Senses. And as Objects in

their Bulk are sensible, but are insensible in their minute Parts: so it is in the inward Sensations or Perceptions of the Mind in respect of its Objects. We may puzzle and perplex our selves in the Deductions, which may be made from the most common Notions. Nothing is more certain and familiar to our Minds, than our own Thoughts. That we Think, and Understand, and Will, we all know; but what is the Principle and Subject of Thought in us, and how our Understanding and Will act upon, and determine each other, is matter of perpetual Dispute.

The Sum of this Argument is, that our Faculties are finite, and of no very large Extent in their Operations, but are confined to certain Objects, and limited to certain Bounds and Periods. Both our Natural and Acquired Knowledge is conversant about certain kinds of Objects, and our Faculties are fitted and suited to them; and from the Properties and Affections which we observe in them, we form Notions, and make Conclusions, and raise Maxims and Axioms. Now if we apply our Natural Notions to things which we know only by Revelation, we must be very liable to great Mistakes about them. For thus it is in things not so much out of the Reach of our Capacities, and which are not of a spiritual Nature; if we frame speculative and abstract Ideas from the Principles and Maxims which are form'd in our Minds from sensible Objects, we may soon puzzle our selves, and seem to demonstrate Contradictions; which demonstrates only, that all Arguments of this nature are vain and unconcluding. And therefore it must be absurd to reject the Mysteries of Religion, because they will not come under the Rules of Logick and Philosophy, when they are acknowledg'd to be incomprehensible, and therefore not to be judg'd of as to the *Manner and Nature* of them by the Rules and Principles of Humane Sciences.

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What has been here alledg'd concerning the Contradictions about the Divisibility of Matter is no more than has been generally confess'd by the best Philosophers and Mathematicians. And the excellent Mr. Boyle, having produced the Testimony of Galileo and Des Cartes upon this Subject, concludes with this Observation. ^a *If then such bold and piercing Wits, and such excellent Mathematicians, are forced to confess, that not only their own Reason, but that of Mankind, may be pass'd and non-plus'd about Quantity, which is an Object of Contemplation, Natural, nay Mathematical, and which is the Subject of the rigid Demonstrations of pure Mathematicks; why should we think it unfit to be believ'd, and to be acknowledg'd, that in the Attributes of God, who is essentially an infinite Being, and an Ens singularrimum, and in divers other Divine things, of which we can have no knowledge without Revelation, there should be some things, that our finite Understandings cannot, especially in this Life, clearly comprehend?*

II. Every Man believes and has the Experience of several things, which in the Theory and Speculative Notion of them, would seem as incredible, as any thing in the Scriptures can be suppos'd to be. It was well observ'd by ^b Quintilian, and may be observ'd by any one that will consider it, that very many things are true, which scarce seem credible, and as many are false, which have all the Appearance of Truth; and yet the Cause of Unbelief in Matters of Religion is chiefly this, that we are hardly brought to believe any thing possible to be done, which we never saw done, and judge of things not from any Principle of Reason, but from our own Experience, and make this the Measure of what is possible to be, not considering that many things may be altogether as possible, which

^a *Considerations about the Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion*, §. 2.

^b *Sunt enim plurima vera quidem, sed parum credibilia; sicut falsa quoque frequenter verisimilia, Quintil. Institut. l. iv. c. 2.*

we never knew done, and that we should think many things impossible, of which we have the daily Experience, if we had never seen nor known them to be. For what we have the daily Experience of, we are apt to think very easy, and scarce suspect that there can be any Difficulty in it, but frame to our selves some kind of account of it, and please our selves perhaps with a Conceit that we perfectly understand it, and conclude, that such and such things must needs come to pass, from the Causes which we assign. For when a thing is common and familiar to us, we either take no Pains at all to consider the Nature of it, or when we do observe and consider it, being ashamed to confess our own Ignorance, we persuade our selves, that there is no such great Difficulty in it, but fancy we understand the true Reason and Cause of it. ^c And if it were not for the carelessness of some in not minding the wonderful Effects of Nature, and the Pride of others in fancying that they are ignorant of nothing, which is the constant Object of their Senses, I am persuaded that there are several things in the World, which we daily see and experience, that would seem as wonderful almost as the Resurrection it self, or any Mystery in Religion. The greatest Philosophers have been able to give but a very imperfect account of the most ordinary and obvious things in Nature, and if we had only a Relation of them without any Trial or Experience, we should be inclin'd to conclude them impossible. Who, that is ignorant of the Tides, would imagine or easily believe, that Rivers at certain places of their current, by regular intervals and variations of time, do every day change their course, and flow backward from East to West, and from North to

^c *Quis enim Æthiopus antequam cerneret, credidit? Aut quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit? Quam multa fieri non posse, priusquam sunt facta, judicantur? Plin. Nat. Hist. l. vii. c. i.*

South? The King of *Siam*, it is said, would not believe the *Dutch* Ambassador, but thought himself affronted, when he was told by him, that in *Holland*, Water would become so hard in cold Weather, that Men or Elephants might walk upon it: and the Relations of things in those Countries, would have seem'd as strange to us, if the constant Report of Men, who have been there, had not made them familiar to us. It was formerly disbeliev'd, nay absolutely deny'd, as absurd and impossible, that there could be any place, as that which is now known by the Name of *America*, or that the Torrid and Frigid Zones could be habitable: No Mystery in Religion can seem more incredible to any Man, than these things did appear even to Wise and Learned Men, and if they had not been found to be true by Navigation, they might have seem'd incredible still, for ought we can tell, though now we wonder at the Ignorance of former times, that they should make any doubt of them, and admire how they came to lie so long unknown; for these things seem obvious, when they are once discover'd, and it would be a Disparagement to us, if we could not make as great Discoveries at home, as those do, who travel to the *Indies*. And if we will but consider a little with our selves, we shall find that we may be at least as much mistaken in our Philosophy about the things of another World, as our Ancestors were, for so many Ages, concerning so much of this, and shall conceive it very possible, that there may be a Heaven and a Hell, though we never spoke with any body, that had been in either of those places; and that there may be a Trinity and a Resurrection, tho' we were able to give no account of them. For Nature it self exceeds our Comprehension, and therefore the Divine Essence, and the Almighty Power of God must needs much more exceed it.

The Motion of the Heavens, and of the Winds and Seas, the Light of the Sun and Moon and Stars, the Conception

Conception and Birth of all Creatures, nay the Growth of Corn, and of the very Grass of the Field, and all the most obvious and inconsiderable Productions of Nature, have so many wonderful Difficulties in the Explication of them, that if we were not mightily inclin'd to flatter our selves, I am afraid we should sooner turn Scepticks, than be able to imagine, that we can give any tolerable account of them. For when all is done, we know just enough of them to acknowledge and admire the infinite Power and Wisdom and Goodness of God, and to be led to a stedfast Belief and Assurance of what he has reveal'd of himself, and of the World to come; that *the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead, Rom. i. 20.* How little is it, that we know of this Earth, where we live, and which we dote so much upon? For by the least Calculation, it is above three thousand and five hundred Miles to the Center; but the Art and Curiosity of Man has never reach'd, according to Mr. Boyle's account, after all his Enquiries among Navigators and Miners, ^d *above one mile or two at most downward (and that not in above three or four places) either into the Earth, or into the Sea: yet all Astronomers agree, as he afterwards observes, that the Earth is but a Physical Point, in comparison of the Starry Heaven. Of how little Extent then, says he, must our Knowledge be, which leaves us ignorant of so many things touching the vast Bodies, that are above us, and penetrate so little a way even into the Earth, that is beneath us, that it seems confined to but a small share of the superficial part of a Physical Point? And to shame the Pride and Vanity of Mankind, the chiefest Discoveries in Philosophy, as he likewise observes, have been the Productions of Time and Chance, not of any Wisdom or Sagacity. Which is a remarkable Acknowledgment in a Person, who has oblig'd the*

World with so many wonderful Improvements in experimental Philosophy.

The Circulation of the Blood has been but lately found out, and was look'd upon as absurd at its first Discovery; though now, what Man can doubt of it? And some of the most common effects of Nature might seem as strange as any, if the frequency of them did not prevent our wonder. If (as ^e *Maimonides* puts a case) we suppose a Man of never so good natural Parts, so brought up as to be ignorant of the manner how the several Species of Animals are preserved and propagated in the World, how many Scruples might he raise to himself concerning their Conception and Formation? Might he not object, that it is impossible, that the Infant should ever live, and be nourished, and grow in the Womb? And would he not offer abundance of Demonstrations to prove, that the Natural Birth of Mankind, and of all other Creatures, is utterly impossible? Our Saviour in his discourse with *Nicodemus*, answers his Doubts concerning the New Birth, by putting him in mind, that he was as little able to give an account of the Wind, and that he could not tell *whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*; implying, that there is much less reason to doubt of things of a Spiritual Nature, because we are able to give no sufficient explication of them, when we are thus at a loss about the most common and obvious things in the World, *John* iii. 8. And *St. Paul* confutes all Objections against the Resurrection by a like Argument, alledging, that as it would be intolerably absurd to deny or doubt of the growth of Corn, because it cannot perfectly be explained: so it is much more absurd, to deny or doubt of the Resurrection for no better reason, since supernatural things must be more obscure and harder to be understood by us than natural, *1 Cor.* xv. 36.

^e Maimon. More Nevoch. Part 2. c. 18.

Indeed,

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Indeed, Infidelity could never be more inexcusable than in the present Age, when so many Discoveries have been made in Natural Philosophy, which would have been thought as incredible to former Ages, as any thing perhaps that can be imagined, which is not a down-right Contradiction. That Gravitating or Attractive Force, by which all Bodies act one upon another, at never so great a distance, even through a *Vacuum* of prodigious Extent, lately demonstrated by Sir *Isaac Newton*; the Earth, together with the Planets, and the Sun and Stars being placed at such distances, and dispos'd of in such order, and in such a manner, as to maintain a perpetual balance and poise throughout the Universe, is such a Discovery, as nothing less than a Demonstration could have gained it any Belief. And this System of Nature being so lately discovered, and so wonderful, that no account can be given of it by any Hypothesis in Philosophy, but it must be resolved into the sole Power and good Pleasure of Almighty God, may be a caution against all Attempts of estimating the Divine Works and Dispensations by the Measures of Humane Reason. The vastness of the World's Extent is found to be so prodigious, that it would exceed the Belief not only of the Vulgar, but of the greatest Philosophers, if undoubted Experiments did not assure us of the Truth of it. We are assured by Men of the best art and skill in those things, ^f that every Fix'd Star of the first magnitude, is above an hundred times bigger than the whole Globe of the Earth, and yet they appear less thro' the Telescopes, than they do to the naked Eye, and look no bigger than meer *Specks* or *Physical Points of Light*; and the Sun, which is some millions of Miles nearer to us than the Fix'd Stars, is by Mathematicians gene-

^f See Mr. Boyle, of the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God.

rally believed to be above an hundred and threescore times bigger than the Earth ; and by the exactest Calculations, is estimated to be eight or ten thousand times as big as the whole Earth, and (as Mr. Boyle thinks) may perhaps be found to be yet much vaster by farther Observations. The Earth is ^s computed to be above seventeen millions of *German Miles* distant from the Sun : And a Bullet carried with the same swiftness that it has when it is shot out of a Cannon, supposing it moved from the Earth to the Sun, would spend twenty five Years in its passage ; to move from *Jupiter* to the *Sun*, it would require one hundred and twenty five Years ; and from *Saturn* thither, two hundred and fifty Years : And such a Bullet, by Mr. *Huygens's* computation, would spend almost seven hundred thousand Years in its passage between us and the nearest of the Fix'd Stars ; he speaks concerning the nearest of them, and then stands amaz'd, to think *what a prodigious number besides there must be of those, which are placed so deep in the vast Spaces of Heaven, as to be as remote from these, as these are from the Sun.* For, if with our bare Eye we can observe above a thousand, and with a Telescope can discover ten or twenty times as many ; what bounds of number, says he, must we set to those, which are out of the reach even of these Assistances ! especially, if we consider the infinite Power of God. Really, when I have been reflecting thus with my self, methought all our Arithmetick was nothing, and we are versed but in the very Rudiments of Numbers, in comparison of this great Sum : For this requires an immense treasury, not of twenty or thirty Figures only in our Decuple Progression, but of as many as there are grains of Sand upon the Shore : And yet, who can say, that even this number exceeds that of the Fixed Stars ?

^s Huygens's Conjecture concerning the Planetary Worlds, lib. ii.

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The Quantity of Motion in the World, is no less wonderful: For if the Earth move upon its own^h *Axis*, a Place situate under the *Æquator* must be carried with as swift a motion, as a Bullet shot out of a Cannon; and if the Earth stand still, and the Stars move round about it, a Fix'd Star in the *Æquator* must move fifty two thousand five hundred fifty five Miles in a Minute of an Hour; which, if not more, is at least three thousand times faster than the motion of a Cannon Bullet: and the motion of the Fluid Matter interspers'd between the Earth and the Stars, must be answerably rapid. And yet all these prodigious Motions are so exactly proportion'd and moderated, that, as that great Philosopher Mr. Boyle observes, * No Watch, for a few Hours, has ever gone so regularly, as the whole World has been moved for so many Ages: And in the consideration of innumerable Instances of the stupendous Works of Nature, The Ingenious, says he, confess their ignorance, and the Confident betray theirs. A late Writer having observed from Mr. Huygens, that a Cannon-Bullet would be twenty five Years in passing from the Earth to the Sun, and consequently fifty Years in moving through the Diameter of the Sun's Orb; concludes, according to the proportion of the Diameter to the Circumference, that a Cannon-Bullet would be about one hundred and fifty Years in performing the Circuit of the Earth's annual Motion; or that the Earth moves about one hundred and fifty times faster than a Cannon-Bullet: Which would be rightly concluded, if

^h Mr. Boyle, *ibid.*

* The best Mathematicians of our Age deny, that there has been any Variation of the *Ecliptick*, since the eldest Observations that are come down to us; for tho' Ptolemy and Hipparchus do make it differ about twenty Minutes from what it is now found to be, yet that difference is not so considerable, but that it may well be imputed to the differences of Instruments, or Observations, in point of Exactness. Vid. Ray's *Physic. Theolog. Disc.* p. 323.

the Earth moved in a perfect Circle. But then he adds, that this Orb being less than a Point, in comparison of the whole World's extent; if one could leave this Earth, and go on from any side of it in a Right Line to all Eternity, he might perhaps never come to the last of those Suns, which we call Fixed Stars. This is in effect to say, that there may be an infinite number of Fix'd Stars, or a Space containing an infinite number of Miles; or, that there may be such a number of Fix'd Stars, or of Miles, as is capable neither of addition, nor of subtraction. So manifest a Contradiction there is, in supposing any thing Infinite but God himself.

But if any Man shall think these Calculations extravagant, (as Discoveries in Philosophy are commonly thought, by such as are little conversant in it) let him remember, that the highest Calculations, which seem most extravagant, are set down, according to the best Observations that the Wit of Man, after the experience of so many Ages, has been able to make. So that whether these Accounts be true or false, they shew the insufficiency of human Understanding to examine the Works of God; and do, by consequence, shew how much more incapable the wisest of Men are to comprehend the Infinite Essence of the Creator himself.

The famous ⁱ Mr. *Huygens*, lately mention'd, speaking of the Passage and Communication of Light every way, and in every point of Space through such vast Regions, (which must be much more to be admired, if there be suppos'd to be a *Vacuum*, in which there can be nothing to direct or determine its Motion and regulate its Course) has these words; *All these things are so wisely, so wonderfully contrived, that it is above the power of human Wit, not to invent or frame somewhat like them, but even to imagine or comprehend them.*

ⁱ Conjecture concerning the Planetary Worlds, lib. i.

To say nothing of the strange Discoveries concerning the Formation and Contexture of the Bodies both of Plants and Animals; the innumerable little Animals, which are discover'd by Microscopes in but one drop of Water, and many other Observations of the like nature, are so wonderful, that we might well suspect the truth of the Experiments, if Men of the greatest skill and integrity, as well in our own, as in other Countries, did not agree in them. The vast quantities of Water, which are continually flowing out of so many thousand Rivers into the Sea, keep their constant course, and are some way so disposed of, as that the Sea and Land retain always a due proportion to each other. But the Originals of the Fountains from whence those Rivers proceed, and how this Circulation of Waters is made, is still matter of dispute. The Concussions of Earthquakes reaching sometimes to so vast an extent, and the prodigious Eruptions of Fire from divers burning Mountains in several parts of the Earth, throwing out abundance of Matter in Rivers of Fire, of great breadth, for many Miles together, seem incredible to those who have not read and consider'd these things. The Attraction and Verticity of the Loadstone, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, Life and Motion, every thing in Natural Philosophy, when seriously examin'd, has so many inexplicable Difficulties, as would make a considerate Man very modest in his Censures concerning things supernatural. For if we had been placed in another World, a Natural History of this might have seem'd as strange to us, as any thing revealed can do now. And it must be great presumption in us, who know so little of the World we live in, to talk pragmatically of another, of which we have only been told; and to believe no more than our Senses can inform us of, when every Sense may inform us, how narrow and imperfect our Knowledge is, and that we take upon trust, or swallow in the gross, what we are commonly least distrustful about.

And

And not only Nature, but even Art, exceeds the Apprehensions of most Men. The *Mechanical Powers* and *Motions* are wont to be mistaken for *Magick*, by such as have not skill and experince in those matters: The Performances of *Archimedes* were so wonderful, beyond all expectation or belief, that the King of *Syracuse* is said to have made a Decree, to forbid any Man to question whatever *Archimedes* should assert. The Force of Gun-powder might be thought incredible, if it were not so common amongst us. Not to mention, that the *Indians* took Watches for Animals, and could not imagine how Men could hold correspondence at a distance by a little piece of Paper. What Man is there among the Vulgar, that can conceive how the Dimensions and Distances of the Sun and Stars can be taken, and how the Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, and of the Satellites of *Jupiter*, can be calculated? And is not the Knowledge of the wisest Man upon Earth infinitely more surpass'd by the Divine Wisdom, than his Knowledge can excel that of the greatest Idiot?

III. Those who disbelieve and reject the Mysteries of Religion, must believe things much more incredible. 1. He that will not believe the Being of an Eternal God, must believe Matter to be eternal: For it is certain, something must be eternal, because nothing could produce nothing; and unless there always had been something, there never could have been any thing. But this eternal Matter must either have been once without Motion, or always with it: If it were once without Motion, then Matter must move it self, that is, Motion must be produced without any thing to produce it. If it were always in motion, then there must have been an eternal succession, since Motion cannot be all at once; for the very nature of Motion supposes Progression, and no Body can move in this Space and the next, at the same instant; for then it must be in two Places at once. But all succession

of Duration is gradual, and the Degrees of it are capable of being numbred ; and to suppose an Eternal Succession, is to suppose an Infinite Number ; that is, a Number to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be subtracted ; or a Number which is no Number. All Motion is transient ; and whatsoever Motion was once present, is now past ; and whatsoever is now past, was once to come : therefore, whatsoever Motion is now past, had once a beginning ; or else, as it once was not, so it never could have been. Motion therefore could not be Eternal, and consequently the World could not exist from Eternity.

But since there must be something Eternal, there must be something, the Duration whereof is indivisible, or which has all its Existence together, so as to have existed now no longer than it had done before the Beginning of the World. For this is the notion of Eternity, that it has neither Beginning nor End : and therefore, things eternal never had a less or shorter duration, than they now have ; and can never have a longer, after millions of Ages, than they had the first Year, or Day, from whence we may be supposed to begin the computation of those Ages. For a longer or shorter Duration, must suppose a Beginning, from whence the computation is made ; and therefore, that which is Eternal, and had no Beginning, can have neither a longer nor a shorter Duration, but always the same : and by consequence, Time can bear no proportion to Eternity ; because that which had a Beginning, can bear no proportion to that which had none. Yet Eternity must co-exist with Time, in all the Differences and Successions of it, and must be present with every part of it ; that is, the Eternal Being exists the space, suppose, of a thousand Years, and a Temporal or Created Being exists at the same time as long ; and the Temporal Being becomes a thousand Years older than it was, but the Eternal no

older than it was before ; because, though it co-exist with Time, yet it has no respect to the division of it into Past, Present, and Future. There is no Mystery in Religion more difficult and perplexing than this ; and yet this is no more than what every one, tho' he be a Deist, or an Atheist, must acknowledge to believe, if he will but consider it.

2. Whoever believes that there is a God, and yet believes no Revelation, or that the Scriptures are not by Revelation from him, must believe a God, and yet deny the Divine Attributes ; he must believe that there is a ^k God, who is not essentially just, and good, and holy : which is, in effect, to believe no God at all, as I have proved at large in the former Book.

Much more might be said upon so copious a Subject, but this is enough to make us more humble and modest, in judging of the Divine Mysteries. For, shall poor Mortals, who know so little, and that little so imperfectly, presume to censure the holy Scriptures, because they contain things which they cannot understand ? Shall he, that cannot fully explain the Nature of the vilest Insect, reject what God hath deliver'd concerning himself, because he doth not comprehend it ? *The thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us : but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out ?* Wisd. ix. 14, 15, 16.

^k Ἐδὲ ὁ θεὸς ὄντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἐπαμύναται τοῖς διολιμένοις, καὶ ἀποκρίνεται τῷ ἀπορώσαντι τὸ διαζόμενόν τ' ὀνόματι, &c. Τί δὲ ἄρα λοιπὸν ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τῷ ὅλῳν δημιουργῶν ; ἀδελφωθήσεται κρατεῖν τ' ἐπὶ τ' ἡμῶν τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις δαίμοσι ; &c. εἴτα πῶς ἦν ἀγαθός, εἰ μετὸν ἀμογήν καὶ λίαν τὰ ταῦτα δόξαν, ἔδενός ἡμᾶς ἡξίωσε λόγος ; Cyrill. Alex. contra Julian. lib. viii.

“ But * out of the Contemplation of Nature, and
 “ out of the Principles of Human Reason, to di-
 “ course, or earnestly to urge a point touching the
 “ Mysteries of Faith; and again, to be curiously spe-
 “ culative into those Secrets, to ventilate them, and
 “ to be inquisitive into the manner of the Mystery,
 “ is, in my judgment, not safe: *Da fidei, quæ fidei*
 “ *sunt*. For the Heathens themselves conclude as
 “ much, in the excellent and divine Fable of the Gol-
 “ den Chain, that Men and Gods were not able to
 “ draw *Jupiter* down to the Earth; but contrariwise,
 “ *Jupiter* was able to draw them up to Heaven.
 “ Wherefore, he laboureth in vain, who shall attempt
 “ to draw down heavenly Mysteries to our Reason;
 “ it rather becomes us to raise and advance our Rea-
 “ son to the adored Throne of Divine Truth.

C H A P. II.

Of Inspiration.

ALL the Motion of Material Things is deriv'd
 from God; and the best account which those
 who have most study'd the Nature of Motion, have
 been able to give of it, is only this, that it is an
 Effect of the Divine Power manifesting it self accord-
 ing to certain Laws or Rules, which God has been
 pleas'd to prescribe for the Communication of Mo-
 tion from one Body to another. And it is at least as
 conceivable by us, that God doth act upon the Imma-
 terial, as that he acts upon the Material part of the
 World; and highly reasonable to suppose, that he
 concerns himself with our Souls, much more than with
 our Bodies. There is no doubt to be made, but that

* *Ld. Bacon's Advancement of Learning*, B. iii. c. 2.

separate and unbody'd Spirits have ways of conversing, or communicating their Thoughts to one another : Indeed, all the Communication and Discourse, that is among Men in this World, is properly between their Souls, which use their Bodies as Instruments for the Conveyance of their Thoughts and Notions from one to another ; and as their Bodies are more or less fit and serviceable to this end, so their Discourse is more or less easily convey'd ; and therefore Souls, when they are at liberty from these Bodies, must have a Power to communicate their own Thoughts, in a way much more free and unconfin'd, than in this Life ; as they have more Knowledge in a separate State, so they must have fitter means to communicate it. And since the Happiness of Heaven consists in the Vision of God, that is, in the Communications of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, God certainly can as well act upon the Minds of Men in this mortal State, though we be less capable of receiving or observing the Influences of his Spirit. Since finite Spirits can act one upon another, it is reasonable to believe that the Spirit of God, *the God of the Spirits of all Flesh* doth move and work upon the Spirits of Men, that he enlightens their Understandings, and inclines their Wills by a secret Power and Influence in the methods of his ordinary Grace. That, when he reveals no New Objects of Faith to them, he disposes and enables them to believe those already reveal'd, and to live suitably to such a Belief. And he can likewise act upon the Wills and the Understandings of some Men with a clearer and more powerful Light and Force, than he is pleas'd to do upon others, in such a manner as to render them infallible in receiving and delivering his Pleasure and Commandments to the World. He can so reveal himself to them, by the Operations of his Holy Spirit, as that they shall be infallibly assur'd of what is reveal'd to them, and as infallibly assure others of it. Which kind of Revelation

velation is styl'd Inspiration, because God doth not only move and actuate the Minds of such Men ; but vouchsafes to 'em the extraordinary Communications of his Spirit ; the Spirit then more especially may be liken'd to the Wind, to which it is compared in Scripture : for by strong Convictions, and forcible, but gracious Impressions, he breaths upon their Souls, and infuses his Divine Truths into them. But upon those, to whom God did thus reveal himself by inward Light and Knowledge, he did moreover bestow a Power of giving external Evidence by miraculous Works, that their Pretences were real, and that what they spoke was not of themselves, but was reveal'd to them from God. This Inspiration the Apostles profess'd to have, both in their Preaching and Writings, and this Evidence they gave of it.

In speaking of the Inspiration, by which the Scriptures were written, I. I shall shew wherein the Inspiration of the Writers of the Scriptures did consist, or how far it extended. II. I shall from thence make such Inferences, as may afford a sufficient Answer to the Objections alledg'd upon this Subject.

I. I shall shew wherein the Inspiration of the Writers of the Scriptures did consist, or how far it extended. And here we must consider both the Matter and the Words of Scripture. The *Matter* is either concerning things reveal'd, and which could not be known but by Revelation, or it is something which was the Object of Sense and Matter of Fact, as when the Apostles testify, that our Saviour was crucify'd, and rose again ; or lastly, it is matter of Reason, as Discourses upon Moral Subjects, and Inferences made from things reveal'd, or from matter of Fact. God, who is a Spirit, can speak as intelligibly to the Spirits and Minds of Men, as Men can speak to the Ear, and in things which could not be known but by Revelation, the Notions were suggested and infused into the Minds of the Apostles and Prophets by the Holy Ghost,

Ghost; but They might be left to put them into their own ^a Words, being so directed in the use of them, as to give infallibly the Sense and full Importance of the Revelation. In matters of Fact, their Memories were, according to our Saviour's Promise, assisted and confirm'd. In matters of Discourse or Reasoning, either from their own Natural Notions, or from things Reveal'd, or from Matters of Fact, their Understandings were enlightned, and their Judgments strengthened. And still in all cases their natural Faculties were so supported and guided both in their Notions and Words, as that nothing should come into their Writings, but what is infallibly True. They had always the Use of their Faculties, tho' under the infallible Direction and Conduct of the Holy Ghost, and in things that were the proper Objects of their Faculties, the Holy Ghost might only support and guide them, as in matters of Sense and natural Reason and Memory, and in their Words and Style to express all these. But in things of an higher Nature, which were above their Faculties, and of which they could have no Knowledge, but from Revelation, the things themselves were infused, though the Words in most cases might be their own, but they were preserv'd from Error in the use of them by that Spirit, who was to *guide them into all truth.*

For though the several Writers of the Scriptures might be allow'd to use their own Words and Style, yet it was under the infallible Guidance and Influence of the Spirit, as when a Man is left to the use of his own *Hand*, or manner of Writing, but is directed in the Sense and Orthography by one who dictates to him, or assists him with his help, where it is need-

^a *Præterea scito, unumquemque Prophetam peculiare quid habere, & eâ linguâ, eâque loquendi ratione, quæ ipsi est familiaris & consuetâ, ipsum impetiri à Prophetiâ suâ ad loquendum ei, qui intelligit ipsum, Maimon. More Nvyoh. Part 2. c. 29.*

ful. *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. iii. 16. God spake unto the Fathers by the Prophets, Heb. i. 1. The Holy Ghost saith, by the Psalmist, to day if ye will hear his voice, Heb. iii. 7. God spake by the mouth of his servant David, Acts iv. 25. David saith of himself, the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. And God is said to speak by the hand of Moses his servant, and by the hand of his servant Abijah the Prophet, 1 Kings viii. 53. xiv. 18. By which it appears, that he used the Prophets as his Instruments in revealing his Will: For as Miracles were by the immediate Power of God, though wrought by the Hands of Men, so the Revelations were of God, though spoken or written by the Prophets and Apostles. But though God used them as his Instruments, yet not as mechanical, but as rational Instruments; and as in working their Miracles, they were not always necessarily determin'd to the Place, or to the Persons on whom they were wrought, but in general were guided to work them, when they were proper and seasonable; and the Actions, by which they wrought them, were their own, though the Power that accompany'd them, was of God; so in their Doctrines, they might be permitted to use their own Words and Phrases, and to be guided by prudential Motives, as to Time, and Place, and Persons, with a directive Power only over them, to speak and write nothing but infallible Truth, upon such occasions, and in such Circumstances, as might answer the end of their Mission, with which they were entrusted.*

God promis'd Moses, when he sent him to Pharaoh, that he would be with his mouth, and with Aaron's mouth, and would teach them what they should say, Exod. iv. 12, 15. And our Saviour tells his Disciples, ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony

testimony against them and the Gentiles: But when they deliver you up, take no thought, how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, Matt. x. 18, 19. And if Moses was inspired upon that particular occasion, and the Apostles were inspired in things which were personal, as in the defence that they made for themselves, they must much rather be inspired in their Writings, which concern the Church in all Ages. St. Luke had perfect understanding of all things from above, Luke i. 3. so Doctor Lightfoot renders it with great Probability: for thus *ἀποθεὸν* is used for *ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ* in many places of Scripture, John iii. 3, 31. xix. 2. Jam. i. 17. iii. 17. And this the Church of Corinth expected from St. Paul; they sought a proof of Christ speaking in him, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. as that Apostle tells them he did, and that not in a weak and obscure, but in a powerful and effectual manner. He writes for the same reason to the Thessalonians, ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 2. and he distinguisheth between his own Judgment (assisted and enlightned, though not infallibly, by the Holy Ghost) and the Commandments of the Lord, or the infallible Dictates of the Spirit, 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25, 40. The Holy Ghost taught the Apostles all things, and brought all things to their remembrance, John xiv. 26. and guided them into all Truth, John xvi. 13. and the *Unction* from the holy One instructed 'em to know all things, 1 John ii. 20. that is, all things pertaining to Salvation; this is said of their Disciples, and therefore may in a more especial manner be affirmed of the Apostles themselves; insomuch that the words themselves are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, which things also we speak not in the words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, 1 Cor. ii. 13. For they were under the conduct and influence of the Holy Ghost in the choice of every word they used, tho' not so, as to be inspired with a new

new Style and Dialect ; the words themselves were not always suggested, but they were always inspired in the use of them ; and tho' they might be permitted to chuse their own Words and Expressions, yet it was with this limitation, that they were never permitted to make choice of such, as would not fully and infallibly express the Mind of the Holy Ghost.

And therefore, 1 Cor. xiv. 13. the Apostle gives this direction, *Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, pray that he may interpret ;* that is, let him pray, that he may have the Divine Inspiration to assist him in expressing himself in a known Tongue, by which he is enabled to speak in an unknown one, and that he may be infallible in rendring that in his own Tongue, which he infallibly speaks in another. Which makes it evident, that when they spoke by Inspiration in their own Language, they had the Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the use of their words ; and this was the reason why those that spoke by Inspiration in a strange Tongue, durst not presume to interpret the words, which the Holy Ghost dictated to them in that Tongue, so as to give them out for Divine Revelation, unless they were particularly empowered to render them in their own Language with the same exactness, with which they were inspired to speak in a strange Tongue. For that the necessity of praying that they might interpret, could not proceed from any inability to interpret, by reason of the force and heat of the Rapture which was upon 'em, that made 'em unable to utter their Conceptions in their own Language, or to retain the sense of them in their minds afterwards, seems plain from verse 27. *If any Man speak in an unknown Tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret, &c.* For if they had been acted by such rapturous Heats and Extasies, they could have been as little able to refrain, when the Rapture was upon them, and to remember what they had to deliver, when

when their course came to speak, as they are supposed to have been to remember what they were inspired to speak in one Language, when they went to express it in another. Neither were they ignorant themselves of what they spoke. But when it is said, *ver. 14. for if I pray in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit prayeth, but my Understanding is unfruitful*; the meaning of that is, that it was of no benefit to others, tho' he that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, edifieth himself, *ver. 4.* Some Men were inspired to speak in strange Tongues with as much readiness, and more exactness than they could do in their native Language; but this was insignificant to such as understood not the Tongue in which they spoke. *What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also, ver. 15. i. e.* I will pray by the Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but in my own Language, in which my Understanding is employed, and the words are not all directly suggested to me by the Spirit (as they must be in a Language which I speak merely by Inspiration) but I am only so far guided and assisted in the choice and use of my words, as to speak infallibly the mind of the Spirit; *Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, &c. ver. 16.* Those who had the Gift of Tongues were, it seems, so puff'd up with it, that they would worship God in no other but in those Languages, tho' none of the Assembly understood them, and would be always unnecessarily and unseasonably repeating the Revelations, which they had received in strange Languages: The Apostle tells such Men, that it was very improper and absurd to deliver their Revelations in an unknown Tongue, or to Pray or give Thanks in a Language not understood by those that heard them, but that they should pray that they might interpret, or forbear the use of the Gift of Tongues, unless before them who understood the Tongues in which they spoke, that it might be for Edification. For in their Inspirations, they were
confined

confined at certain times to some particular Language, as the Spirit gave them utterance ; and it might have done great prejudice to the Truth of Religion, if they of themselves had ventured to render that into their own Language, which was revealed to them in a strange Tongue : and for this reason it was not permitted those, who spoke with Tongues, to speak in any but that, in which the Revelation was made to them, unless they were enabled to do it by being inspired with a Power of Interpretation. For to *Speak with Tongues*, and to *interpret*, were distinct Gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 10, 30. and whatever Gift any one had received, he was confined to the exercise of it, and might not presume to pretend to another, which he had not received.

The Gift of *Tongues*, and of the *Interpretation of Tongues*, being so particularly distinguished, this must imply, that the Apostles (who are supposed to have had all the Gifts, which others had but in part) were guided by the Spirit in their Words and Expressions, since those who spoke by the Spirit, were unable to interpret without a particular Gift ; for no Interpretation was sufficient, but such as render'd the Sense with infallible truth and exactness ; and if this exactness of words was requisite in their Assemblies, it must be much rather necessary in the Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. Among other Gifts of the Holy Ghost, are reckon'd the *Word of Wisdom*, and the *Word of Knowledge*, 1 Cor. xii. 8. the former *Grotius* understands of speaking Wise Sayings, and the latter of Knowledge in History ; and to the rest was added the Gift of *discerning of Spirits*, ver. 10. And as there were several Gifts, so there were several Offices in the Church, *Ephes.* iv. 11, 12. Now the several Gifts of the Holy Ghost were not all bestowed ordinarily upon the same Person, but such as were necessary for that Office and Employment which he was to execute. But as the Apostolical Power comprehended in it the Powers

Powers of every other Office, so it was requisite that the Apostles should possess the Gifts proper for the performance of whatever was to be done by them. And when God, by his Providence and disposal of things, gave the Apostles and Evangelists occasions of writing upon such and such Subjects, and to such and such Persons, or Churches, he by his Spirit inwardly excited and assisted them in it, bestowing upon them the Gifts of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, and of writing and speaking either in their own or any other Language, in which they were required to write or speak: For we are not to suppose that any Gifts were bestowed upon others, and yet denied to them, to whom they were most useful and necessary, in order to the delivering of that Faith and Doctrine, which was to be the standing Rule for the attainment of Salvation to all Christians unto the end of the World. When others had the Gift of speaking and interpreting strange Languages, it cannot be conceived that the Writers of the Holy Scriptures should be refused that necessary Assistance in the Languages in which they wrote, that might preserve them from Error; and if any, without the Gifts proper for it, had undertaken any Office or Ministration, the Gift of *discerning of Spirits* was a Security to the Church from any hurt that might ensue by the pretences of such Undertakers.

We may be certain, that all the Gifts which were bestowed for the Edification of the Church, were (as far as they were needful) vouchsafed more-especially to all such as were to leave behind them, for the benefit of the Church in all Ages, an account of the Gospel of Christ, and the terms of the Salvation to be obtained thereby; and that no such Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghost was wanting, as might preserve them from Error in any particular: for there is no particular, but it will fall under some one of those Gifts which were bestowed upon the first Disciples.

They

They were not necessarily to write in an exact and elegant Stile, but in such as was secured from Error in whatever they delivered. To what purpose else had been so many several Gifts? To keep them from gross Errors, and fundamental Mistakes, there could have been no need of such a variety of Gifts: but when every sort of Error, which Men are prone to, had a Remedy provided to prevent it, we may be assured that no Error was suffered in those Writings, which were the most important Work of the Apostolick Function, and designed *for the edifying of the Body of Christ*, not in one Age and Nation only, but throughout all Ages, and in all Parts of the World.

II. I shall now proceed to make such Inferences, as may afford a sufficient Answer to the Objections alledged upon this Subject.

1. The Inspiration of the Writers of the Scriptures, did not exclude human Means, such as Information in Matters of Fact, either by their own Senses, or by the Testimony of others, or Reasoning from their own Notions and Observations; but the Holy Ghost guided them infallibly in the use of all such Means.

2. The Inspiration of the Prophets, and Apostles or Evangelists, did not exclude the use of their own Words and Stile. All Laws become obligatory, not from any Elegancy of Stile, or Fairness of the Character, in which they are written or printed, but from the Authority of the Law-givers, by whom they are enacted. And it is as unreasonable for any now to cavil at the Stile and Language of the Divine Writers, as it would have been in those, who saw the Sacred Books in their Hand-writing, to have objected, that they did not write the most exact and beautiful Hands. For they might as well use their own way of Expression, as their own manner of Writing. And as they might be permitted the use of these, so they might be permitted, or, in some cases, directed to use the Words of others. Many things delivered in one Book

of

of the Scriptures, are likewise delivered in another; and some things are repeated in the same words, that God revealing the same things, and in the same express words, at different times, and by different persons, might make the Revelation of them the more evident and remarkable. For that in which several inspired Persons concur, is the more taken notice of, and becomes the more observed, as a thing of great weight and moment. The reason why *the Dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice*, was, *because the thing was established by God, and God would shortly bring it to pass*, Gen. xli. 32. It is in this, as it is in all other things, it is expedient, that in Matters of great Concernment, there should be the more Solemnity, and that they should be the oftner repeated, and the more insisted upon; and if they be express'd in the same words, this implies, that those words carry more than ordinary weight in them: And therefore, not only all the Divine Writers agree in the same purpose and design, and testify the same things, as to the chief Points of Religion; but some Prophets have foretold the same things, even in the same words with others, as *Isa. ii. 2, 3, 4. Mic. iv. 1, 2, 3. Isaiah uses the same words, chap. xviii. 2, & 7.* and several Laws and Matters of Fact are repeated in words which are very near the same.

3. Tho' some things are set down in the Scriptures indefinitely, and without any positive assertion or determination, this is no proof against their being written by Divine Inspiration. For this doth not prove, that the Pen-men of those Passages were uncertain and doubtful in the Particulars so express'd; because the things were of that nature, that it was needless to speak precisely of them: As when *St. John says, John xxi. 8. They were not far from Land, but as it were two hundred cubits*; it cannot from hence be concluded, that the Evangelist was ignorant how far they were

from Land: For it was not material to his design, to be more particular in a circumstance of that nature; but it was sufficient to say, that they were about two hundred Cubits off at Sea; and it is usual with all Writers to omit Fractions, and insert only whole Numbers, when, it is not material to their purpose to insist upon every minute Circumstance. It is ordinary with the best Writers to express things uncertainly, which they were notwithstanding thoroughly acquainted withal; and to seem ignorant of things which they perfectly understood, but pass'd over as not worth the taking notice of, or not considerable enough for them to own the knowledge of them. It is a known Elegancy, to say, *nescio quid*, or *nescio quem*, when the Author, so speaking, was not ignorant of the Thing or Person there meant, but either signified his contempt of the Person or Thing, or intimated that it was not worth his while to trouble himself, or his Hearers, or Readers, with a more particular Relation. The ^a *Romans*, out of that Awe and Reverence which they had for Oaths, never spoke positively in giving evidence of things which they were certain of, and had seen themselves. ^b *Videtur* was a word of form, with them, in things certain. And uncertain Forms of Speech are observed, by ^c *Ulpian*,

^a *Credo hæc eadem indutiomarum in testimonio timuisse aut cogitasse: qui primum illud verbum consideratissimum nostra consuetudinis Arbitror, quo nos etiam tunc utimur, cum ea dicimus jurati, quæ comperta habemus, quæ ipsi vidimus, ex toto testimonio suo sustulit, atque omnia se scire dixit. Cic. pro M. Fonteio. Vid. Acad. Qu. l. ii. sub fin.*

^b *Non est quod mihi illud Discessionum more respondeas, Hæc pars major esse videtur. Senec. de Vita Beat. c. i. Solennia verba, quæ Consul, numeratis in quâque parte Senatoribus, pronuntiabat. Lips.*

^c *Τὸ ὃ Νομίζω, ὡς ἦδη ἐν τοῖς Σωκρατικοῖς, καὶ τὸ Δοκεῖν, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἃ παντὶ ἐπὶ ἀμφιβολίᾳ τάττειν οἱ παλαιοὶ, ἀλλὰ πολὺ λάκκις καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. Ulp. in Demosth. Olynth. i.*

to have been usual with the ancient *Greek* Authors, in their speaking of things whereof they were very well assured. It could be of no use or moment, in relation to the miraculous Draught of Fishes, to know whether the Ship were two hundred Cubits, or half a Cubit or a quarter of a Cubit, over or under, from the Land; and it is usual with St. *John* to express himself in this manner, *John* ii. 6. vi. 10. xix. 14.

Either then (to keep to the same Instance) St. *John* might know the precise Distance, and, for the reasons mentioned, not declare it; or, it not being of any use or consequence for us to be more particularly informed in a matter of that nature, the Holy Ghost might suffer him to be ignorant of it, if he had no other means of knowing it but by Inspiration: For the Holy Ghost assisted the Apostles and Evangelists to write infallible Truth, but not always to write every little circumstance concerning the things which they relate. Many Miracles are wholly omitted, and many Circumstances not considerable or material to be mentioned, are omitted, of those Miracles which are recorded. But if nothing be related which may lead us into Error, and nothing omitted which is necessary to be known; this is sufficient, and is all that can be expected in a Book which is to be a Rule of Faith and Manners to us. It is necessary that nothing but Truth should be contained in it, but not that every Truth should be in it; for then *the world it self could not contain the books that should be written*. Suppose therefore that St. *John* did not know precisely how many Cubits the Ship was from Shore; what doth this prove? That he did not know the Miracle which he there relates? Doth it prove, that he was not inspired in what he doth relate, if he were not inspired in what he omits? If he had determined the precise Distance, and had not known it, this might have discredited

the Authority of his Gospel : but when he has not determined it, can this be an argument in diminution of its Authority, if he did not know what he did not profess to know ? Is it not a good argument in confirmation of its Authority, that he would assert nothing but what he certainly knew, if in what he was not perfectly assured, he mentions no farther than he knew of it ? So *St. Paul* acquaints us, when he spoke himself, and *not the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 6, 12, 25, 40. 2 *Cor.* viii. 10. which is an Argument to us, that in all other cases he did not speak of himself, but the Lord spoke by him : it is a confirmation of his Integrity, that he would impose nothing upon us as of Divine Authority, which is not really so, because he that told us in any one case, that he spoke of himself, not as from the Lord, would have made the same Declaration in other cases, whenever he had written any thing without express Revelation.

4. In things, which might fall under humane Prudence and Observation, there the Spirit of God seems not to have dictated immediately to the Prophets and Apostles, but only to have used a directive or conducting Power and Influence, so as to supply such Thoughts and Apprehensions to them as might be most proper and seasonable, and to keep them in the use of their own Reason, within the bounds of Infalible Truth, and of Expediency for the present case and occasion. They might be permitted to insert such things as the state of Affairs required ; which, tho' not immediately dictated by the Holy Ghost, yet were agreeable to the end and design of his Inspiration, and serviceable to the Ministry, to which they were appointed. There seems to be no necessity to assert, that *St. Paul* sent for his Cloak and Parchments by Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or that he had any immediate command or direction to salute the particular Persons named at the end of his Epistles ; but only that

that his Doctrine was immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost : and as he might be permitted to put that into his own words, but so as never to be suffered to express it otherwise than in such a manner, as was fully agreeable to the mind and intention of the Holy Spirit, and therefore infallibly true : so in these lesser and indifferent matters, which some present occasion made requisite to be written of, he had the guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost to prevent him from writing any thing, but what was expedient in those Circumstances, and serviceable to his Calling and Ministry in the propagation of the Gospel.

But things of an indifferent nature in themselves might become necessary as to Time, and Place, and Persons, and therefore might in some cases be of Divine Inspiration. *St. Paul's* journeying into *Macedonia* rather than into any other Country, was in it self a thing indifferent ; but the Salvation of many Souls might depend upon it ; and therefore he was warned by Revelation, not to preach the Word in *Asia*, nor to go into *Bithynia*, but into *Macedonia*, *Acts* xvi. 6, 7, 9. In like manner, the Salutations of particular Persons at the end of his Epistles, tho' they may seem to us to be of no great importance, yet might be of mighty consideration and consequence to those who were concerned in them. To be saluted by an Apostle in so particular and solemn a manner, might revive their Spirits, and encourage them to perseverance under their Temptations and Afflictions : for his Salutations include his Benediction, which was the exercise of his Apostolick Office and Authority in one great branch of it. And God himself might direct the Apostle to salute such Persons for their support and comfort, and encouragement in the Faith. Besides, the Salutations added at the end of the Epistles, are a confirmation of the Authority of them : the Persons there mentioned, were as so many Witnesses, to at-

test that they were genuine. For, besides the general concernment of the Catholick Church, and of the several Churches more especially, to which such Epistles were written, the Persons who were saluted by name in them, were more particularly concerned to take cognizance of them, and to know all the circumstances relating to them.

And St. Paul's advice to *Timothy*, to drink no longer Water, but to use a little Wine for his Stomach's sake, and his often Infirmities, 1 Tim. v. 23. was requisite to be given in that Epistle, that it might remain recorded in the Scriptures, in confutation of that Superstition, which some were guilty of in abstaining from things lawful, (and particularly from Wine) out of an opinion of Holiness in refraining from them, and of Sin in the use of them.

5. That infallible Spirit which assisted and inspired the Apostles and other Sacred Writers, was not permanent and habitual, or continually residing in them, nor given for all purposes and occasions; as we may observe in St. Paul, who acquaints us in some things that he had not received of the Lord what he writes. But the Gifts of the Spirit were bestowed for the benefit and edification of the Church; and therefore were given in such measures, at such times, and upon such occasions, as might be useful for edification. We find that in a matter of great concernment and importance to the whole Church, the Apostles met together in Council, to decide the Controversie; both, because according to our Saviour's promise to them, they might expect a more abundant Effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them, when they were assembled in his name for that purpose; and because the thing in debate depended upon Matter of Fact, viz. that the Holy Ghost was given to the Gentiles, and therefore it was requisite that many should meet together, and testify of that matter. Besides, several that came down from *Judea* to *Antioch* had refused to submit to the

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Authority of St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and it was necessary that these Men should be convinced by the unanimous and joint Authority of the Apostles, who being met in a full Council declar'd, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, Acts xv. 28. that is, not only to us, but to the Holy Ghost, to the Holy Ghost as well as to us. And this was for an Example and Precedent to the Church in future Ages, to determine Controversies by the Authority of Councils.

6. The Gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestow'd upon Men, who might have personal Failings, and were *men of like passions with us*, Acts xiv. 25. *They had this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of themselves*, 2 Cor. iv. 7. But they were chosen to be Apostles and Evangelists, and therefore must be so far exempt from Error in the Execution of their Office and Ministry, as not to deliver false Doctrines in their Writings, which were to be read and receiv'd of all Churches in all Ages of the World; for this would have defeated and subverted the Design of the Institution of the Apostles, and of the Mission of the Holy Ghost, and therefore this God would not suffer, tho' they might be suffer'd to incur such Failings as were no Prejudice to the Gospel of Christ.

7. There being nothing asserted in the Canon of Scripture, but what has some relation to the Edification of the Church, though some parts of it have a less direct and apparent Tendency to this end than others; if any one Passage or Circumstance should have been erroneous, this would diminish the Authority of the Scriptures, and make them in some degree less capable to promote the end for which they were written. And there being so many particular Gifts, the Gift of *Wisdom* and of *Knowledge*, of *Tongues*, and of *Interpretation of Tongues*, and of *discerning of Spirits*: and so many distinct Offices, as *Apostles*, and *Prophets*, and *Evangelists*, and *Pastors*, and *Teachers*, we cannot

conceive how those Gifts and these Offices could be better employ'd than in preserving that Book from Error, which was to be the Standard of Truth for all Ages; or how, if that Book had not been secur'd from Error by them, these Gifts and Offices had answer'd the end of their Appointment.

Thus much may suffice, to prove the Scriptures to be infallible in all the parts and circumstances of them. But it may be observ'd, that if the Infallibility of the Sacred Writers had not extended to the Words and Circumstances, but only to the Substantial and Fundamental points of Religion, this of it self were enough to vindicate the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion. Nay farther, if the Scriptures were written only with the same Certainty and Integrity that is in *Thucydides*, or in any other credible Historian (which the most obstinate and inveterate Adversary can never deny) yet even then no Man, without much Unreasonableness could reject them.



C H A P. III.

Of the Style of the Holy Scriptures.

WHen God reveals himself to Men, he must be suppos'd to do it in such a manner, as is suitable to the Necessities and Occasions of those to whom the Revelation is made, and in such Language and Forms of Speech, as that he may be understood by those to whom he reveals himself; he may be suppos'd to speak in the Idiom, and in the Metaphors and Phrases in use amongst them, and to allude to their Customs and Manner of Life, to have Regard to the Condition and State of their Affairs, and to condescend in some measure to their Weaknesses, to
speak

to speak to their Capacities, so as to be understood in his Laws, and to encourage and excite Men to obey them. For though the particular Reason and Design of every Law be not always necessary to be known, yet it is necessary that those to whom they are given, should know what the Laws are, and that they should have their Duty prescribed in such a way, as may be effectual to recommend the Practice of it to them.

The Style of the Holy Scriptures is a Subject which has been largely discours'd of by Mr. Boyle and others. What I intend to say upon it, I shall reduce to these Heads. I. The Grammatical Construction, II. The Metaphors, and Figures, and Rhetorical Schemes of Speech. III. The Decorum, or Suitableness of the Matter, or the Things themselves. IV. The Method.

I. The Grammatical Construction and Propriety of Speaking. It has been by many observ'd, that there is a great Resemblance between the Style of the Old Testament, and that of *Homer*, the most ancient Book we have besides; and it is likewise observable, that those things which are by some look'd upon as Defects in the Scripture-Style, as the using one Gender, or one Number, or Case, or Tense, for another, the putting Participles for Verbs, the Comparative or Superlative for the Positive, Actives for Passives, or Passives for Actives, are particularly taken notice of by ^a *Plutarch*, as Excellencies in *Homer*; and he says, they were usual in Prose as well as in Verse, amongst the Antients. Whatsoever Solœcisms or Improperities of Speech are to be found in any part of the Scriptures, the like have been observ'd ^b in *Homer*, *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, *Pindar* and *Apollonius Rhodius*, by their several Scholiasts, in *Thucydides* by *Dionysius Halicar-*

^a In vita Homeri.

^b Vid. Dan. Heins. Proleg. ad exercit. Sacr.

nasseus, in *Pausanias* by *Sylburgius*, and in *Tully* by ^c *Erasmus* and others. But it is remarkable, that ^d *Dionysius Halicarnasseus* in his *Roman Antiquities*, imitated *Thucydides* in those very things for which he before had censur'd him. *Xenophon* is observ'd by ^e *Heladius*, not to be always exact in point of Grammar; which he ascribes to his military Life, and his Conversation with Strangers. Many Solæcisms are found in the ancient Inscriptions, and in *Hyginus*, an Author, as it has been generally suppos'd, of *Augustus's* Age, which are to be imputed rather to the Custom of Speech amongst the Vulgar, than to the Mistake of these Authors. For in Languages so difficult as the *Greek* and *Latin* are, it was impossible but that the Common-people must often make great Mistakes, which by degrees became customary, and were the Character of the ^f *Low* and *Plebeian Style*: and in the *Greek* Tongue they ascribed their Solæcisms to the particular *Dialect* of the People, among whom they were most in use.

The Stoicks, who were the most numerous and flourishing Sect of Philosophers in the Primitive times of Christianity, had little regard to the Rules of Grammar: for they were caution'd by their Master *Chrysippus* not to be careful about such Niceties: and they are highly commended by a ^g great Critick, for expressing their Thoughts, though commonly with Words very proper and significant, yet in a Style so free from all Affectation or Curiosity, as cometh next to the Simplicity of the Holy Scriptures.

The Design of Revelation is not to teach Words but Things, and to express them in such Words as may serve for that purpose; and if an improper

^c Dialog. Ciceron. Vid. Tusc. Disput. l. ii. c. 1. ^d H. Stephan. in Dionys. Halic. c. 16. Casaub. Animad. in eund. p. 30.

^e Apud Phot. cod. cclxxix.

^f Vid. Schefferi Præfat. & Munkeri Dissertat. in Hyginum.

^g Mer. Caustub. in M. Antonin. l. i. n. 14.

Word or a Solœcism may be more serviceable to that end, it is beyond all Exactness and Propriety of Language. The Truth is, it is a Sign of a little Genius to be over-curious about Words, as *Demosthenes* intimated in his Reply to *Æschines*, telling him that the Fortunes of *Greece* did not depend upon a Criticism; which *Tully* mentioning, says, it is ^h an easy matter to pitch upon a Word spoken in the Heat of Discourse, and in cool Blood to make sport with it. But this is at large treated of by *Longinus*; and *Seneca* speaks excellently to this purpose; ⁱ If you observe, says he, that a Man's Speech is too nice and critical, be sure that he has a Mind taken up with little things. A Man of a great Mind speaks with the less Caution and Exactness, whatsoever he says; he is better assur'd of the matter of his discourse, than to trouble himself much about Words. This is the reason that so many great Authors have afforded so much Work for the Criticks and Scholiasts, to blame, or to excuse them, and very often to commend them for departing from the common Forms. ^k *Plutarch* ascribes it to the Assurance, which *Homer* had of himself, and his great Skill in his own Art, that he ventur'd to transgress the common Rules in the first Verse of his Poem. And ^l *St. Jerom* observing, that *St. Paul* uses the Words

^h Facile est enim verbum aliquod ardens (ut ita dicam) notare, idque restinctis jam animorum incendiis, irridere, Cic. Orator.

ⁱ Cujuscunque orationem videris sollicitam & politam, scito animum quoque non minus esse pusillis occupatum. Magnus ille remissius loquitur & securius; quacunque dicit, plus habent fiducia, quam cura, Sen. Epist. cxv.

^k Plut. de Profect. Virtut. Sentiend.

^l Hier. ad Algaf. Q. 10. — Cum sciamus etiam quosdam sapientia deditos non tantum abjecisse sermonis cultum, verum etiam cum possent ornatiùs atq; uberius eloqui, trivialem studio humilitatem secutos, ne corrumpere scilicet gravitatis rigorem, & sophisticâ se potiùs ostentatione jactarent. Enimverò dissoluti

Words and Phrases of *Cilicia*, says, it is no wonder, when *Virgil* follow'd the Forms of Speech likewise of his own Country. And *St. Jerom* himself, who perfectly understood the Purity of the *Latin* Tongue, and wrote it with great Elegancy; sometimes ^m purposely used an improper Word, that was better understood. The Old Testament has nothing of this nature, but what, for ought that can now be known, was most proper in the *Hebrew* Tongue, whatever it may be in others. And as to the New Testament, it is penn'd in such Words, and in such Construction of Grammar, as might render it most useful, not according to the *Attick*, or any other Dialect, which was known to so few in comparison, that it was confin'd, as it were, to one Country, or known only to the Learned in others; but in such *Greek*, as was generally understood in the remote and numerous Nations, where that Language was spoken. For which reason so many Expressions are taken from the Translation of the *Septuagint*, which was so much in use amongst the Proselytes in all parts of the World. In the Preface to the Book of *Ecclesiasticus*, it is observ'd, that the same things uttered in *Hebrew*, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them; and ⁿ *St. Jerom* shews, that there was a necessity of making use of such Words, as were first taken from the Heathen Fables, in translating the Scriptures, which had no Affinity to them: but when Men speak or write, they must do it so as to be understood, unless they will do it to no purpose; and therefore must take such Words

soluti est pectoris in rebus seriis quarere voluptatem, & cum tibi sit ratio cum male habentibus atq; agris, sonos auribus infundere dulciores, non medicinam vulneribus admovere. Arnob. lib. i. p. 49. Non debet quisquam, ubi maxima rerum momenta versantur, de verbis esse sollicitus. Quintil. Institut. l. viii. c. 3.

^m Ad Princip. Expof. Pf. xlv. & in Ezech. xl.

ⁿ Hieron. ad Amos, v. 8. & in Epist. ad Galat. iii. 1.

as are to be had, and are intelligible to those for whose Benefit they write, and they must be contented too with such Grammatical Construction, as well as with such Words, as should be found expedient to the end for which they write. ° Sometimes again it was necessary to frame new Words, to express the Propriety of the *Hebrew* Language, as *Tully* has done in his Books of Philosophy, to explain in *Latin* the Terms of it in the *Greek* Tongue. And in all respects Men must accommodate themselves to their Subject, and to the Capacities of those for whom they undertake to discourse upon it.

II. Metaphors, and Rhetorical Schemes or Figures of Speech. Men differ as much in their Forms and Schemes of speaking, as they do in their Manners or Customs, or in their Complexions and Dispositions. Every Man has something peculiar in his way of expressing himself, which is so easily distinguish'd by good Criticks from that of others, that they seldom fail in it, though there can be no absolute Certainty in things of this nature. And ^p *Photius* observing that some Orations which pass under the Name of *Demosthenes*, were, by reason of the difference of Style, ascribed by certain Criticks to other Authors, makes this Remark, that he had often taken notice of a great Resemblance in the Style of Orations made by different Authors, and of as great an Unlikeness in the Style of those made by the same Man. But the different Character and Manner of Style in the several Countries and Nations of the World is much more easily discern'd, than it can be in particular Men of the same Country. The *Lacedemonians* were noted for using but few Words even in ^q *Homer's* time: And ^r *Thucydides*, when he makes a long Oration, for their

° Hieron. in Galat. i. 2.

^p Phot. cod. cclxv.

^q Iliad. iii. v. 214.

^r Hist. l. iv. c. 17.

46 *The Reasonableness and Certainty*

Embassadors, is forced to put an Excuse into their Mouths, for speaking contrary to the Custom of their Country. The People of *Caria*, *Phrygia*, and *Mysia*, were not at all polite and neat, says *Tully*^s, and therefore they loved a gross and slovenly kind of Discourse, which the *Rhodians*, not far distant from them, never approved of, and the other *Greeks* liked it much less, but the *Athenians* could not endure it. ^t There were three kinds of Style among the *Greeks*, the *Attick*, the *Asiatick* and the *Rhodian*; and *Tully* besides makes the *Asiatick* twofold. The *Attick* was close and comprehensive; the *Asiatick* was quite contrary to this, and was very lofty, figurative and copious; which some assigned to other Causes, but *Quintilian* more truly thinks it proceeded from the different nature and temper of the *Athenians* and *Asiaticks*. The third kind of Style was the *Rhodian*, which was of a middle nature betwixt the other two, neither so concise as the *Attick*, nor so redundant as the *Asiatick*, but was a mixture of both; the Genius of that People inclining rather to the *Asiatick*, but *Æschynes*, in his Banishment at *Rhodes*, formed their Style, and fashioned it after the *Attick* manner, as far as the *Rhodian* Genius would admit of it. * *Quintilian* comparing *Cicero* with *Demosthenes*, says, that the Forms and manner of speaking among the *Romans*, would not permit some things in their Orations, which were most admired at *Athens*.

It would be endless to make Observations upon particular Authors. *Xenophon* and *Plato* have not escaped the Censure of *Longinus*; and *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*, besides what hath been objected to them in particular,

^s *Adsciverunt aptum suis auribus opimum quoddam & tanquam adipata dictionis genus*, Cic. Orator.

^t *Quintil. Instit. lib. xii. c. 10. Cic. Brut.*

* *Sed & nobis illa, quæ Attici mirantur, diversa Latini Sermōnis ratio minus permiserit.* Quint. Institut. L. x. c. 1.

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^z Lette
Ethiop.
^b Cic.

fall under the general censure, which ^u *Seneca* passeth upon all Authors of the greatest Fame and Merit; but he adds, that there is no certain Rule for Style, which is continually altered by the use and custom of the place.

Both the Language and Actions of the Eastern Nations, especially in the earlier Ages of the World, had something more vehement and passionate in them, than those of these Western Countries. The Stiles and Titles of their Kings are a remarkable instance of this; witness that of ^x *Sapores, Rex Regum Sapor, particeps siderum, frater Solis & Lunæ Constantio Cæsari, fratri meo, Salutem plurimam dico.* And they retain the like Titles to this day; ^y the Grand Signior's is in some things the same, in others more extravagant; he is stiled, *God on Earth, the Shadow of God, Brother to the Sun and Moon, the Giver of all Earthly Crowns.* The King of ^z *Æthiopia* calls himself, *the King at whose Name the Lions tremble.*

The Romans themselves, who used greater modesty of Style, and more gravity in their Actions than many other Nations, practis'd divers things in their Orations and Pleadings, which amongst us would be very strange and absurd. Thus ^a *C. Gracchus*, a great and popular Orator at Rome, was wont to have one stand behind him with a Flute, to give him the true Key, to which he was to raise his Voice; which would go near to make the best Orator amongst us ridiculous. It was customary likewise with the Romans, to use all Arts to raise the Passions, by Actions and Representations, as well as by Words: ^b Sometimes

^u *Nullum sine venia placuit ingenium. Da mihi quemcunque vis magni nominis virum, dicam, quid illi atas sua ignoverit, quid in illo sciens dissimulaverit.* Sen. Epist. cxiv.

^x Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xvii. c. 5.

^y Ricaut's Hist. lib. i. c. 2.

^z Letter of David, K. of *Æthiopia*. in Geddes Church Hist. of *Æthiopia*.

^a Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. Quintil. Institut. lib. i. c. 10.

^b Cic. pro P. Sextio.

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they would hang up a Picture, representing the Fact about which they were to speak, and the Accusers were wont to produce in open Court a Bloody Sword, or the Garments of the Wounded, and the Bones, if any had been taken out of their Wounds, or to unbind the Wounds, or shew the Scars. ^c *Quarum rerum ingens plerumque vis est, velut in rem presentem animos hominum ducentium.* These and other things more strange to us, were practised by the most famous Orators of their Times amongst the Romans, by which they spoke to the Eyes, as it were, of their Hearers; and therefore these may well be reckoned amongst the Figures and Modes of Rhetorick, whereby they gained upon the Affections of the ^d People. Tully tells us of himself, that he took up a Child sometimes, and held it in his Arms, to move Compassion; and that when ^e *M. Callidius* had accused *Q. Gallius* of an attempt to poison him, and had made it out by clear proof, he urged this as a sufficient Objection against all that *Callidius* had said, that he had not express'd any Passion in his Pleading; he had not smote his Forehead, nor his Thigh, nor (which was the least thing he could have done, if his Accusation had been true) he had not so much as stamp'd with his Foot. *Callidius* had all the Accomplishments of an Orator, but this of moving the Passions by such means; and the want of this was looked upon as a very great defect in him. Upon the Death of the two *Scipio's* in Spain, when the signal of Battel was given by the new General, ^f *Livy* describes the Roman Army weeping, and knocking their Heads, and throwing themselves upon the Ground. And what could a Speech at any time have availed with such Men, that

^c Quintil. lib. lib. vi. c. 1.^d Cic. Orator.^e *Nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis; frons non percussa, non femur pedis (quod minimum, est) nulla suppositio.* Cic. Brut.^f Liv. lib. xxv. c. 38.

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had been delivered in a cold and unaffecting manner? * *Metellus Numidius* wept frequently : ‡ *Cæsar* himself wept, and rent his Garment in a Speech which he made to his Soldiers, as soon as he had pass'd the *Rubicon*. The ^h like happened to *Alexander* and his Soldiers, upon their submission to him, after a Mutiny: And ⁱ he wept upon other occasions. Weeping was so usual with the Warriors of ancient Times, that we need not wonder, that when they found their Wives and Children were taken captives by the *Amalekites*, *David* and the People that were with him, lift up their Voice, and wept, until they had no more power to weep; 1 Sam. xxx. 4. Whosoever observes their Orations, would think that the ancient Greeks and Romans had Tears more at command than Men now have : for the Orators wept as freely upon every occasion, as if that were true of them all, which ^k *Æschines* said of *Demosthenes*, that it was easier for them to weep, than for others to laugh. And sometimes not only the Orators themselves, ^l but the Judges, and the whole Auditory, were all in Tears.

The great Art of Oratory consisted in Action, (by which is to be understood both the Voice and Gesture) as *Demosthenes*, that best knew, declared ; and therefore though nothing were more common than for Historians, and Poets, and Philosophers, to read their Works to the People, yet the Orators seldom read their Orations ; however, ^m *Tully* and others of his

* *Salust. Bell. Jugurth.* ‡ *Suet. Jul. Cæs. c. 33.* ^h *Arr. de Expedit. Alex. 7.* ⁱ *Id. de Reb. Indic.* ^k *Æschin. contr. Ctesiph.*

^l *Cic. pro Plancio. Pro Milon. Pro Rabirio.*

^m *Recitetur oratio, quæ propter ejus magnitudinem dicta de Scripto est. Cic. pro Plancio. — Ita enim dixisti (Q. Fuli) & quidem de scripto Philipp. 10. Cum Q. Scævola — Jurisperitorum eloquentissimus eloquentium jurisperitissimus, exscripto, Testamentorum jura defenderet. De Orator. l. i. Ac ne periculum memoria adiret, aut in ediscendo tempus absumeret, instituit recitare omnia. Suet. in Aug. c. 84. vid. ib. c. 89. Quæquam Orationes & nostri quidam & Græci leſtitaverunt. Flin. lib. vii. Epist. 17.*

time, and before, sometimes did it. And from the time that *Augustus* read his Speeches, which he had occasion to use in the Senate, or to the People or Soldiers, it grew into a custom by his Example and Encouragement, and so continu'd, as we find by frequent instances in *Dion Cassius*.

The common ⁿ Forms of Speech, even among the *Roman* Country-men, were so Metaphorical, that they will scarce bear a literal Version into our Language. And the Philosophers themselves had Customs, which may seem very odd to us : It ^o was a custom among them, when they propounded a Question, to offer with it a dried Fig, and he that accepted of the Fig, thereby undertook to answer the Question.

The Figurative Expressions of the Prophets, and their Types and Parables, were suitable to the Customs of the Places and Times wherein they lived, and very fit to give a lively and affecting Representation of the Message they had to deliver. Thus for instance, it was a customary thing in those Countries to rend their Garments, * to pluck off their Hair, to go barefoot, and cover their Faces, to throw themselves upon the

ⁿ *Qua (translatione) frequentissime Sermo omnis utitur non modo urbanus, sed etiam Rusticorum: Siquidem est eorum gemmare vites, sitire agros, latus esse segetes, luxuriosa frumenta. Nihil horum parum audacter, &c. Cic. Orator.*

^o Joac. Kuhnii observat. ad Diog. Laert.

* Ἀμφοτέρῃσι δὲ χερσὶν ἔλων Κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
 Χεύατο κάκισθαλῆς χάραεν δ' ἤχωνε προσῶπον,
 Νεκταρεῖω δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρην,
 Αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωσὶ τανυοδῆς
 Κεῖτο, φίλησι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἤχυνε δαΐζων

Iliad. Σ v. 23.

*Ducitur infelix avo confectus Acates
 Pectora nunc fadans pugnis, nunc unguibus ora :
 Sternitur & toto projectus corpore Terrâ.*

——— *It scissâ veste Latinus*

Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans.

Æn. xi. v. 85. xii. 609.

ground, in time of Grief and Trouble, which would be looked upon as a certain sign of Distraction amongst us, but was commonly done by the gravest and wisest Men in those Parts of the World. And the Expressions of their Joy and other Passions, were proportionable to those of their Sorrow. Now it was reasonable, that the Prophets, in delivering their Prophecies, should accommodate themselves both in their Words and Actions, to the People to whom they were to be delivered: For else they would never have been regarded, or would have made little or no impression upon their Minds, which caused the false Prophets to take the same method, 1 Kings xxii. 2.

It is ^P *Origen's* and *Maimonides's* Observation, that the Prophets sometimes had Matters of small importance revealed to them, as when *Samuel* acquainted *Saul*, that the Asses were found, 1 Sam. ix. 20. that they might keep the People from going to false Prophets to be satisfy'd in such things; besides that by this means they gained Authority to be rely'd upon, when they had Affairs of the greatest consequence to foretel. *Joseph's* interpretations of the dreams of the Butler and Baker, gave occasion to his being sent for to interpret the Dream of *Pharaoh*, Gen. xli. 9. and *Samuel* confirm'd *Saul* in the belief of what he had foretold him concerning the Kingdom, by the Prediction of three Signs that beset him in the way, 1 Sam. x. 2, 9. And there was reason, that in every case, they should make all necessary Allowances for the Infirmities of the People with whom they had to do, and should use all fitting compliances with them, that they might the more prevail with them for their good.

It is the custom of the Prophets, as ⁹ *St. Jerom* observes, when they speak against *Babylon*, the *Ammo-*

^P *Origen. contr. Cels. lib. i. Maimon. in Seder. Zeraim. Præf.*

^{P. 7.} ⁹ *Hier. in Abdiam.*

nites, the Moabites, the Philistines, and other Nations, to use many Expressions and Idioms of the Language of the People concerning whom they speak. ^r One who was as conversant in the Jewish Learning as most Men have been, tells us, that their Books abound every where with Parables, that Nation inclining by a kind of natural Genius to this sort of Rhetorick. St. Jerom had, in his time, observed, that the Syrians, but especially the People of Palestine, were wont to use Parables in all their Discourse. And it is to be considered, that several things, which are set down as Matter of Fact, might not be actually done, but only represented as done, to make the more lively impression upon the Hearers and Readers, who well enough understood, that it was not necessary, that these things should be actually performed; but they might be only parabolical Descriptions, or Representations of Matter of Fact, the better to illustrate and convey those Commands and Instructions to their Minds, which were to be delivered. Thus ^s St. Jerom and Maimonides understood Ezekiel's lying on his side for Three hundred and ninety Days, and Hosea's marrying an Adulteress, only as Similitudes, or Parables and Figures of Speech; and thus, from the ancient Rabbins, they interpret both what is related of these two Prophets, and that which is said of Jeremiah's hiding his Girdle in Euphrates. This was the most intelligible and effectual way that could be made use of to a People, among whom such figurative Expressions were usual, and known to mean no more than what they were intended for. So Pharaoh's chief Butler giving him an account of Joseph's interpretati-

^r Lightf. Hebr. & Talmud. exercit. on Matt. xiii. 3. *Familiares est Syris & maxime Palestinis ad omnem sermonem suum Parabolas jungere, &c.* Hier. in Mat. xviii. 23.

^s Hier. in Hose. Proëm. & Comment. in c. i. Maimon. More Nevoch. Part 2. c. 46.

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ons of his own and of the chief Baker's dream, says, me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged, Gen. xli. 13. *Jeremiah* is said to be ^t set over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant, Jer. i. 10. because he was appointed to prophesie of all these things. *Ezekiel* speaks of himself, as coming to destroy the City, because he prophesied that it should be destroyed, Ezek. xl. 3. and the same Prophet, in his Description of the City and the Temple, has delineated the Temple larger than all the earthly *Jerusalem*, and *Jerusalem* larger than the whole Land of *Canaan*, to shew the *Jews* the necessity of understanding him in a mystical and spiritual Sense; as ^u one has observed, who very well understood the dimensions of both. And thus *Ezekiel* was also carried from place to place in Vision only, as the Text seems to express; Ezek. xi. 1. xl. 1, 2. as the *Jews* ^x in St. *Jerom's* time understood it, and as the *Chaldee* Paraphrase interprets it. But *Hosea* might be commanded either in vision or in reality to marry a Woman who had been an Adulteress, but ^y afterwards became chaste and vertuous; thereby to set an Example to the *Israelites*, who had gone a whoring after other Gods, that if they would forsake their false Gods, and return to the true God, the God of their Fathers, he would still accept and receive them, in like manner as the Prophet had took an Adulteress to Wife, upon assurance that she would prove faithful to him. However this be understood, these Actions, and others of like nature, are to be

^t Sic dicuntur Historici eos occidere, quorum eadem narrant. Casaub. Comment. ad Theophrast. Charact. c. 1. §. 1.

^u Lightf. Prospect of the Temple, ch. 11.

^x Hier. Præf. in Dan.

^y Nec culpandus Propheta interim, ut sequamur historiam, si meretricem converteris ad pudicitiam, sed potius laudandus, quod ex mala bonam fecerit. Ib. Comment. in Hof. c. 1.

look'd upon no otherwise than as the Style of Scripture, or as certain ways of expressing the Divine Will to Men. For the Mind may be express'd by ² Actions as well as by Words, and whatever Actions were perform'd with this intention, properly come under the notion of Style, or different ways and modes of Expression; and all Objections made against them under any other notion, proceed upon a mistake, and can be of no force.

The Prophetick Schemes of Speech which seem most strange to us, were usual with the Eastern Nations, as ^a Mr. Mede shews of the *Indians, Persians* and *Ægyptians*. The *Revelation* of St. John chiefly consists of Allusions to the Customs, and History, and Notions, and Language of the *Jews*, as he and Dr. Lightfoot have shewn in many places, which are most contrary to our manner of speaking. And some Passages allude to the customs of other Nations, well known and practis'd at that time. Thus the Slaves were wont to have their Master's Name or Mark upon their Forehead, and the Soldiers to have the Name of their General upon their Right Hand; and the like Marks were wont to be received by Men, in token that they had devoted themselves to their Gods: from whence we read of the Mark of the *Beast* received by his Worshipers, *in their Right Hand, or in their Foreheads*, ^b *Rev. xiii. 16.* and of his *Father's Name written in the Foreheads* of those that stand in Mount *Sion* with the Lamb, *Rev. xiv. 1.* St. Paul alludes to the *Grecian Games* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, who were much addicted to those Sports, and had one sort of them, the *Isthmian*, perform'd among them, *1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.* and he alludes to the distinction among the

² *Est enim Actio, quasi corporis quadam eloquentia.* Cic. Orator.

^a Comment. in Apocal. Part. 1.

^b Vid. Grot. ad loc. &

Veget. l. ii. c. 5. *de re Militari cum Stewechii Comment.*

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Romans, between Freemen and Slaves: For which he gives this reason, that it was in condescension to them, *I speak after the manner of Men, because of the Infirmary of your Flesh*, Rom. vi. 19. *Melchisedec* is said to be without father, without mother, without * descent, Heb. vii. 3. because his Pedigree is unknown; which was a most significant way of Expression to the Jews; who were so careful and exact in their Genealogies. But the very same manner of Expression is also us'd ^c by *Livy*, *Horace*, *Seneca*, and *Dion Cassius*, upon the like occasions.

There is much of Nature, but very much likewise of Use and Custom, in the several Schemes and Forms of Rhetorick. We meet with a sudden Change of the Person speaking, *Jer.* xvi. 19, 20, 21. xvii. 13. and with interlocutory Discourse, *Isa.* lxiii. and many places of Scripture are obscure to us, for want of distinguishing the Persons who speak: Thus, for instance, *Jer.* xx. 14. the Prophet seems transported abruptly from one Extreme to another, but if they be the Words of the wicked (mention'd ver. 13.) under the Divine Vengeance, from the 14th ver. to the end of the Chapter, the Sense will be more easy. This abrupt Change of the Person is taken notice of by *Longinus*, as an Excellency in *Homer*, *Hecataeus*, and *Demosthenes*; and the want of distinguishing the Persons speaking, has been a great Cause of misunderstanding the Scriptures, ^d as *Justin Martyr* and *Origen* observe.

Many Instances of the like nature might be given in the best Heathen Poets. And the reading the ancient Poets, is the best help for the understanding all other

* Ἀγενεσίᾳ.

^c Patre nullo, matre serva, Liv. l. iv. c. 3. — nullis majoribus ortus, Hor. Sermon. l. i. sat. 6. — duos Romanos reges esse, quorum alter Patrem non habet, alter Matrem. Nam de Servii Matre dubitatur: Anci Pater nullus; Numa nepos dicitur, Sen. Epist. cviii. — ἀπάτωρ αὐτῶ (Σηόης) ἔμπεροεν λόγον ὡς ἀπαλείας ὦν, Dion. Cas. l. lxxvi.

^d Justin. Apol. 2. Origen. Philocal. c. 7.

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Authors of great Antiquity ; for the ancients any Author is, the nearer his Style comes to Poetry. The first design of Writing was to delight, so as to be the better able to instruct, which made Verse * much more ancient than Prose ; and tho' it be natural for Men to speak in Prose, and not in Verse, yet, it seems, the humour of the *Greeks* would not bear the writing Philosophy in Prose, till the time of *Cyrus* ; for then ^e *Pliny* tells us, *Pherecydes* first wrote in Prose, which must be understood of Philosophy, for he ascribes the first Writing of Prose in History to *Cadmus Milesius*. ^f *Orpheus*, *Hesiod*, *Parmenides*, *Xenophanes*, *Empedocles*, *Thales*, and *Eudoxus*, wrote their Philosophy in Verse. And the ancient Writers now extant in Prose, *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*, have many Expressions, which are seldom or never met withal besides, but in the Poets. *H. Stephens* made a Collection of the Poetical Words us'd by *Xenophon*, which is prefix'd to his Works. And the Orators both among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, were as exact and curious in the Feet and Measure of their Prose, as the Poets could be in Verse. Great part of the Scriptures is in Verse, and the different way of writing in different Ages and Nations, appears in nothing more, than in the several sorts of Poetry. That way of writing all Verse in Rhime, which in these parts of the World is most in use and esteem, would have been ridiculous to the *Greeks* and *Romans*. Tho' the use of Rhime in Verse is so far from being without Example in Antiquity, that it is perhaps the most ancient of all ways of writing Verse. Acrosticks, tho' of no esteem, and little us'd in many Ages and Countries, are of great Antiquity & among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as well as in the Eastern Na-

* Περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς φράσεως καλεσχυασμένης καὶ φιλοσοφικῆς ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητικῶν. Strab. l. i.

^e Plin. Hist. l. v. c. 29. l. vii. c. 56. Vid. Harduin. ad loc.

^f Plut. de Pythiæ Orac.

^g Cic. de Divin. l. ii, §. 3.

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tions. Verses compos'd in the Acrostick and Alphabetical way, were found to be a help to the Memory, and this Benefit, and the Orament which it was then suppos'd to give to Poems, is the cause why it is sometimes used in the Scriptures : and sometimes the Inspiration was so strong upon the Writers Mind, as to interrupt the Art and Method, which he had propos'd to himself, as *Psal.* xxv. and cxlv. or perhaps it might be customary upon certain occasions to omit some Letter in the Alphabet in such Compositions, for reasons which we are ignorant of, but which might be very satisfactory and agreeable to the Sense of those Times and Countries. ^h The Ὠδή ἀσιγμῶ is an Example of this among the *Greeks*, us'd by *Pindar* and other ancient Poets: The old ⁱ *Spartan*, *Doric* and *Æolick* Dialect chang'd Σ into P, the rough Sound of this Letter being more agreeable, it seems, to those People; and if any of them had written Acrosticks and Alphabetical Poems, Σ would have been omitted. It appears by what is yet remaining of the Old *Roman* Laws, that, on the contrary, the *Romans* sometimes us'd S for R; as *Asa* for *Ara*, *Casmen* for *Carmen*. Rhophalick Verses, which begin with a Monosyllable, every Word increasing by one Syllable more than the former, are to be found in ^k *Homer*: and the *Leonine* or *Monkish* Verses with a double Rhime, one in the middle, and the other at the end, are not without Precedent, but seem from ^l *Virgil* to have been anciently us'd in Charms: To say nothing of the Poems compos'd of divers sorts of Verse, and fram'd into the shape of several things by *Simmius Rhodius*, some of which are ascribed to *Theocritus*.

^h Dionys. Halicarn. περὶ Σαμίων. Ὀνομ. Athenæ. l. x. c. 21.

ⁱ Casaub. in Athen. l. viii. c. 11.

^k ὦ μακάρ Ἀργεῖδην, μοιρῆχρως, ὀλβιοδάμων. *Iliad.* iii. v. 182.

^l *Limus ut hic durescit, & hac ut cera liquefit,*
Uno eodemque igne, Eccl. 8.

The Repetitions so frequent in *Homer*, were not for want of Words, (for no Author ever wanted them less than he) but out of Choice, though later Poets have not thought fit to imitate him in this, and *Martial* turn'd it to Ridicule. *Thucydides* begins and ends most of his Books in the same Forms of words. It is certain, that nothing is more various, than the Wit and Fancy of Man; and it is as certain, that whoever would write to any purpose, must write in some such manner, as the Temper of the People, to whom he writes, will bear, and as their Customs require.

But before I leave this particular, it may be proper to consider the Style of Scripture, in the Metaphorical and Figurative use of Words, in speaking of the Works and Attributes of God. There never was any Book written in a strict and literal Propriety of Words, because all Languages abound in Metaphors, which by constant use become perhaps better known to the Natives of a Country, than the original Words themselves, and in process of time often cause them to be quite laid aside. But then this borrow'd and metaphorical Sense of Words may be very strange to Men of other Countries, especially when they are taken from things peculiar to the place, where they are us'd.

This use of Metaphors ariseth partly from the Likeness that is perceiv'd between things, which makes one thing to be express'd by another, and gives a delightful Illustration to the things discours'd of, and partly from our want of fit Words to express the various natures of things, especially of things spiritual, which we commonly speak of in negative terms, and rather deny, that they are like things sensible, than positively affirm what they are: Thus we say, that they are immaterial, invisible, incorruptible, &c. And when we speak positively of them, we must use such Words, as sensible Objects can furnish us withal, since we can have no other; for we understand their

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Nature so imperfectly, that we are not able to frame a Language on purpose to express it ; and he who should go about such a Work, would neither be understood by others, nor well know what he meant himself. To comprehend, to perceive, to apply, to reflect, to understand, and innumerable other words are taken from corporeal Acts, and apply'd to the mind of Man. But of all Beings, God himself is so far above our Comprehension, that we can never speak of him in Expressions suitable to his Divine Nature ; and therefore when true Conceptions are had of him, it is fittest to speak of him in such terms, as may serve to raise and preserve in us a due Sense of God's Honour, and of our Duty to him. The Reasons then, why God is often spoken of in the Scriptures, after the manner in which we are wont to speak of Men, may be reduced to these Particulars.

1. The Use of Metaphorical and Figurative Expressions is usual in all Languages, and no Language is sufficient to set forth the Majesty and Attributes of God.

2. The peculiar Nature and Genius of the Hebrew Tongue, inclin'd or constrain'd the Writers, in that Language, to express themselves in this manner, *Gen. ix. 5. at the hand of every beast will I require it*, that is, I will require it of every Beast. The Hand of the River is the Side of the River, *Exod. ii. 5. the Hand of the way is the way side*, *Psal. cxl. 3.* and the Hand of the Sword is the Power of the Sword, *Job v. 20. Psal. lxiii. 10. The Son of the Bow is the Arrow*, *Job xli. 28.* And when in our Translation we read, *Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards*, it is in the Original, *as the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly*, *Job v. 7.* The horn of the son of oil signifies in our way of expression, a very fruitful hill, *Isa. v. 1.* and Horn signify'd Power or Strength in the Hebrew, as familiarly, as *Robur* or *Oak* signifies the same in *Latin*. And not only the Vallies are said to shout and sing, *Psal. lxxv. 13.*
but

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but the best Fruits in the land are in the Hebrew call'd the singing of the land, Gen. xliii. 11. The Word Rock is often used to denote the Almighty Power of God, and by the Septuagint and Vulgar Latin is sometimes translated God. For their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges, Deut. xxxii. 31. Those Versions render it, their Gods, and our God: and in like manner, ver. 4, 15, 18. Psal. xxxi. 3. lxxiii. 26. Is there any God besides me? yea there is no God, I know not any, Isa. xlv. 8. in the Hebrew it is, there is no Rock, as the Margin of our Bibles remarks. Ears, Mouth, Hands and Heart, are ascrib'd to the Earth, or Land. Sin in the Hebrew signifies a Sin-offering, as it is translated, and must of necessity be understood in many places of Scripture, as in Hosea iv. 8. and in this Sense Christ was made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. Sometimes Sin is us'd for the Punishment of Sin, Gen. iv. 13. Zech. xiv. 19. We read Josh. xxiv. 27. that Joshua said unto all the people, behold this stone shall be a witness unto us. For it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake un'o us, it shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. This might have been a very improper and unintelligible Speech to another People, but was most significant and emphatical to the People of Israel, who well understood upon what account sense was often ascribed to inanimate things, as Gen. xxxi. 52. Numb. xx. 8, Deut. iv. 26. xxx. 19. xxxij. 1, and afterwards frequently by the Prophets.

3. Every Expression in a Parable is not to be taken in a strict Sense; neither is it necessary, that whatever is set down in the Scripture, must therefore be of divine Inspiration, or absolutely true: for there we find the Speeches and Sayings of divers Men not inspired, and of some very wicked Men, nay of the Devils themselves. So that we are to enquire, by whom and in what manner the Words were spoken, before we undertake to defend them. Wine is said to cheer

God and Man, Judg. ix. 13. But this is spoken by the Vine in *Jotham's* Parable. Yet there is nothing absurd in it: for God, who is said to rejoice in his Works, might well be said to rejoice in the Fruit of the Vine, when he accepted of it in Drink-offerings. And when the Prophet *Jeremiah* ch. xx. 7. says, *O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived*; he expresses his own frailty and infirmity, because of his Enemies, who mocked and reviled him; and ver. 11. he expresses his Trust in God. *But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one, &c.*

4. An express Law was made against the worshipping of God under any Image or Similitude, and the People are put in mind, that they *saw no similitude*, but only *heard a voice*, when the Lord spake to them from the Mount, *Deut.* iv. 12. and that he is without Change or Repentance, *Numb.* xxiii. 19. *1 Sam.* xv. 29. *Malach.* iii. 6.

5. When this Caution had been given, and such a Law made, it cannot be expected, but that the Divine Writers should make use of such Expressions, as were commonly used, and were as commonly understood in a metaphorical or improper Sense, when applied to God, to give the more Force and Emphasis to their Discourse. ^m *Maimonides* has prov'd from the Propriety of the *Hebrew* Words, that the *Image* and *Likeness* of God, in which Man is said to have been made, is to be understood of the Faculties of his Mind; and he lays this down as a general and known Rule amongst the Jews, *Loquitur Lex secundum linguam Filiorum hominum*; and he likewise observes, that both *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* have in their Paraphrases taken care to give the true Sense of such Expressions, as seem to imply any thing corporeal in God. God is said to *smell a sweet savour*, when *Noah*

^m Maimon. More Nevoch. Pt i. c. 1, 26, 27, 28, 36, 48.

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offer'd Burnt-offerings on the Altar, which he built after the Flood, *Gen. viii. 21.* In the *Hebrew* it is a *savour of Rest*, as it is noted in the Margin : because in the Acceptance of it, God ceas'd from his Anger, as *Buxtorf* observes from *Aben-Ezra*. He is said to bear the People of *Israel* on *Eagles Wings*, *Exod. xix. 4.* We read of the Wings of the Lord God of *Israel*, *Ruth ii. 12.* of the Shadow of the Almighty, *Pf. xci. 1.* of his Feathers, and the Shadow of his Wings, *Pfal. xvii. 8. xci. 4.* with Allusion to the Wings of the Cherubim, that cover'd the Ark ; which signify'd God's Protection of his People with as much care and tenderness, as the winged kind have for their young, *Matt. xxiii. 37.* The Scriptures make mention of his Eyes, and Hands, and Feet, to express the Effects of those Actions, which are perform'd by Men with these Members : The right hand of God is *the right hand of Power*, *Matth. xxvi. 64.* And when it was said, *it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*, *Gen. vi. 6.* This was well understood to mean no more than that God acted, as Men are wont to do, when they change their Minds; and repent and grieve at what they have done, and that he would certainly destroy the World which he had made: for *Moses* himself instructs the Children of *Israel*, that God is without any bodily Shape or Substance, and therefore cannot be said to have any Heart, or to be griev'd at his Heart, in the same Sense that it is said of Men. *Numb. xxiii. 19.* it is declared, that *God is not a man, that he should lye, neither the Son of man, that he should repent.* And when God says that *it repented him that he had set up Saul to be King*, *1 Sam. xv. 11.* this is explain'd *ver. 29.* where we read, that *the strength of Israel will not lye, nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent:* and yet again in the last verse it is said, that *the Lord repented, that he had made Saul King over Israel.* The most careless Writer could not so soon and so often forget

forget himself: but what is said of God's repenting, is to be taken in an improper and figurative Sense, to imply that God would act in that case, as Men act when they repent of what they have done, tho' without any Change of Mind, or any Grief, or other Passion in him attending it: the Effect was the same as if God had repented; and therefore, by a *Metonymy*, the Effect is express'd by that which in Men is wont to be the Cause of such Effects, though in God Repentance was not the Cause of it; but the reason and state of the case, which he had fully known and consider'd from all Eternity, and therefore could not be surpriz'd, or mov'd to any Alteration of Judgment by it. *His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, Judg. x. 16. or, it was *shortned*, as the Hebrew word is literally translated in the Margin; that is, according to ⁿ *Maimonides*, the Lord's Mind was shorten'd from afflicting them, or he had no longer a mind to punish them. God has commanded, that our Anger should be without Sin, and he is himself angry without the least Passion or Commotion: but he is displeas'd with Sinners, because he disapproves of their evil Actions, and he is most angry and displeas'd with those, whose Ways and Practices he most dislikes; insomuch that God often threatens to *pour out his fury*, upon impenitent Sinners, that is, to punish them in the most terrible manner, as their Sins deserve; but just and necessary Punishment, how great soever it may be, is not the effect of Passion, but of the highest Reason. When God is said to see, the meaning is, that he knows what is done; when he is said to hear, this signifies, that he understands what is said. ° *Now I know that thou*

ⁿ Maimon. More Nevoch. Pt i. c. 41, 47. Pt iii. c. 24.

° Non enim aliquid ignorat Deus, ut examinando cognoscat, sed sciat Deus, ita dixit beatus Job, ut scire alios faciat, secundum illud: tentat vos Deus Dominus, ut sciat, utrum diligatis eum, id est, ut scire ceteros faciat. Hieron. in Job. c. 31, 6. — Γνώσκων τὰν ἀρετὰν Κόρινθον, Notam faciam beatam Corinthum. Pind. Olymp. 13. τὴν ἀρετὴν αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμνήσω. Schol.

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fearest God, Gen. xxii. 12. that is, now I have had the Proof of it, and have made it evident, that I know it. *God looked upon the Children of Israel, and God knew them*, Exod. ii. 25. that is in our translation, *God had respect to them*. And to the same purpose, *Amos iii. 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth. To prove thee, to know what was in thine heart*, Deut. viii. 2. is the same, as to make that appear, and become known, which I know to be in thine Heart. Gen. xi. 5. the Lord is said to come down to see the City and Tower of Babel, and Gen. xviii. 20. *Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see, whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know*: which implies, that God is not forward or willing to punish, but that he proceeds as Men do in things about which they use most Care and Deliberation. God is represented as a good Governor, who is unwilling to believe ill Reports, and will make a full Enquiry and Inspection into the cause, before he punish Offenders; or in short, here is an Illustration in Fact of that adorable Character, which God proclaims of himself, *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth*, Exod. xxxiv. 6. God says, that he could not destroy Sodom till Lot was escaped out of it, Gen. xix. 22. and to Moses he says, *Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, Exod. xxxii. 10. But we must not imagine, that the Reasons and Motives which Moses there represents to God in his Prayer in behalf of the People of Israel, could prevail more with him, than his own infinite Wisdom and Goodness, or that he could not have preserv'd Lot in the midst of Sodom, as well as he deliver'd Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, out of the Fiery Furnace. But these things are thus express'd for an Encouragement in Righteousness, and to teach us Dependence upon

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upon God; for the righteous *have power with God* as well as *with men*, and shall *prevail*, Gen. xxxii. 28. It was an exercise and Trial of the Faith and Charity of *Moses*, and is propos'd as an Example of Faith and Charity to all, who should read that account of him. Besides, he was a Type of Christ, and, as such, was to make Intercession and Atonement for the Sins of the People, *Exod.* xxxii. 30. For Christ, before his Coming in the Flesh, exercis'd his Mediatory Power, as to the visible Administration of it, by those who were appointed to be his Types and Representatives here upon Earth, which may give a satisfactory account of that Power, which *Abraham*, *Jacob* and *Moses*, and others are said to have had with God.

The Sum of all is, that to give the more Force and Life to the Discourses of the Prophets, and to render them the more effectual to the ends, for which they were design'd, God, who is by the infinite Excellency of his Nature, uncapable of any Passion, † is pleas'd to be represented as subject to Love, and Anger, and Hatred, and all the Passions of Humanity; and He, who knows perfectly all Events from Eternity, is contented even to seem sometimes to doubt of the Effects of his Designs and Proposals, and of the Events of humane Actions; to shew, as ^P *Origen*, *St. Jerom* and *Theodore*t have observ'd, the Freedom of Men, and to declare, that their Destruction is from themselves. He speaks to us in the Language of Men, and assumes to himself all the Passions of humane Nature, that by any means Sinners may be persuaded to turn to him; he is described as angry, and grieved at the Sins of Men, and as one, who rejoiceth at their Repentance: not

† *Sermo divinus secundum intelligentia nostra consuetudinem naturamque se temperat, communibus rerum vocabulis ad significationem doctrinae suae & institutionis aptatis; nobis enim non sibi loquitur, atque ideo nostris utitur in loquendo verbis.* Hilar. in Pl. cxxvi.

^P *Origen* Philocal. c. 23. Hieron. & Theodore. ad Ezek. xi. 5.

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that the Divine Nature can be capable of Anger, or Grief, or Rejoycing, which imply Change and Imperfection, and therefore must be impossible in the most absolutely perfect Being: But because Men are wont to be angry, when they punish, and to be grieved when those do amiss whom they would have do well, and are wont to rejoice when they begin to reform; therefore to set forth, that God will certainly punish unrepenting Sinners, and receive the returning Penitent, and reward the Righteous, both the Goodness and Justice of God are explain'd in such terms, as may most move and affect Men, to shew that the Punishments he inflicts, will in the end be as grievous, as if he receiv'd some loss and disappointment by the obstinacy of the Wicked; and that he will as bountifully reward the Good, as if they had done him some great benefit and kindness, and had made some addition to his own Joy and Happiness, which is infinite and eternal, and therefore incapable of any.

3. The *Decorum*, or suitableness of the Matter in the style of Scripture. This is to be considered with respect to the Persons, the Occasion, and Time and Country; the Rules of Decency being variable according to Circumstances, not fix'd and immutable, as the Precepts of Mortality are. ⁹ *Maimonides* has observ'd, that the Holy Tongue has no words to express things obscene: and 'tis very remarkable, that in those ruder Ages (as they are commonly reckon'd) the *Hebrews* had peculiar Forms of Decency in their Expressions, upon all occasions which required them. And to *know*, in that signification which it hath *Gen.* iv. 1. and in many other places of Scripture, was likewise used by the *Greeks*, and * *Romans*, and is particularly taken notice of by ^r *Hermogenes* for the mo-

⁹ More Nevoch. Par. 3. c. 8.

* *Cæsar*. Bell. Gal. l. 6.

^r *Hermog.* de Invent. lib. iv. c. 11.

deſty of it. We find the Heroes of ^s *Homer* employ'd in as mean Offices as the Patriarchs : and ^t *Herodotus* declares, that in ancient Times, the *Greeks* had no Servants, but did their own work themſelves, or had no other help but that of their Children ; and 'tis reaſonable, that their manner of Speech ſhould be ſuitable to their way of living, and that the one ſhould have no more of delicacy in it than the other ; and if there be any thing in their Writings, which is not ſo agreeable to the niceneſs of latter Times, it is an argument of their Innocency and Purity, and of a native ſimplicity of Manners, void of Pride, and of Shame ariſing from Guilt. It is obſervable, that ſometimes a word of little decency in its proper and original ſignification, has by cuſtom almoſt loſt its firſt meaning, and is apply'd by the politeſt Writers to various ſubjects, as *Reſpuo*, *oppedo*, *eructo*.

In matters of Hiſtory, ſeveral things may be mentioned, not ſo much for their own ſake, as becauſe they were memorable in thoſe Times, and might help to keep up the Remembrance of other things more conſiderable. If *Moses* has related, who found the *Mules in the Wilderneſs*, (for the original word is capable of a different ſignification) ^u *Homer* has made the ſame Obſervation ; thereby ^x intending, as it is ſuppoſed, to intimate the wickedneſs of the *Eneiti*, by whom Mules firſt became known to the *Greeks*. The Characters and Speeches of Perſons in the Scriptures,

^s Vid. Athenæ. lib. i. c. 4. cum Caſaub. Animad. De Antiquis illuſtriſſimus quiſque Paſtor erat, ut oſtendit Græcæ & Latine Lingua & veteres Poætæ. Varro de Re Ruſtic. lib. ii. c. i. — Majores noſtri virum bonum cum laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum Agricolaſum, bonumque Colonum. Ampliſſimè laudari exiſtimabatur, qui ita laudabatur. Cato de Re Ruſtic. initio.

^t Herodot. 6. c. 137.

^u Εξ Ἑνετῶν, ὅθεν ἡμίονον ἦν αἰσχρολογίων. Illad. 2. v. 852.

^x Διὸ καὶ τὸ ἦ ἡμίονον ἦν αἰσχρολογίων πρῶτον ἐκφρασαι λέγει — τεκμηρίον τὸτο ὅτι αὐτῶν πονηρίας καὶ μοιχθείας δεικνύς. Conſtantin. Porphy. de Them. l. i. c. 7.

are exceeding natural, and discover all the unaffected and inimitable Marks of Truth. They are short, and contain such circumstances and thoughts as are not far fetch'd, but arise from the matter in hand, and have manifest influence upon the Actions themselves. This may be seen in the History of *Joseph* and his Brethren, and in several other Passages, which are so naturally related, that in some of them, the manner of Relation, which manifestly speaks the truth of what is delivered, has given occasion to the cavils of such as have not well considered it. *Saul* enquired of *Abner*, whose Son *David* was; *Abner* answered, he did not know; *David* was brought to *Saul*, who asked him the same Question, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 55, 58. yet *Saul* had sent to *Jesse*, for his Son *David* to play before him upon the Harp, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 19. *Grotius* imputes this forgetfulness to the Distemper which *Saul* then laboured under, and to the multiplicity of his Affairs. But was it ever expected of any King, that he should remember the Names of the Fathers of all his Servants? *Jesse* was an obscure Man, and *David* had not then been so much taken notice of, as that his Father's Name should be known in *Saul's* Court, and *Abner* being absent with the Army, might never see *David* nor hear of him before. In the Relation of *Saul's* Death, the Messenger who brought the News, had declared himself to be an *Amalekite*, yet *David* afterwards enquires of him, *whence art thou?* But nothing could be more natural than for a Man in that consternation to ask that Question so soon after, 2 *Sam.* i. 8, 13. And is there not the like Voice of Nature in these words of *Joseph*, when he discover'd himself to his Brethren? *I am Joseph: Doth my Father yet live?* Gen. xlv. 3. when they so little before had told him, that *Jacob* was still living. Some have alledged, that they could conceive no reason for that Passage concerning the Arrows which *Jonathan* was to shoot, to give *David* notice whether he were to go or stay, because

cause tho' he did shoot in that manner, which by agreement was to be a sign to him that he must be gone, yet they met and discoursed together upon the place, after *Jonathan* had sent his Servant away. But it seems they had a more favourable opportunity than they expected of conversing there: and tho' this happened beyond expectation, yet the Sacred Historian is so punctual as to acquaint us with that sign which was given by an agreement made between *David* and *Jonathan*, when they supposed that it would not have been safe for them to come to one another, the Place appointed being the same, in which *David* hid himself, when *Saul* was present in the Field, a Place probably of Diversion and Recreation; and *Jonathan* stood beside *Saul* upon the like promise made to *David*, 1 Sam. xix. 3. xx. 19.

There is no nicer Subject, than when a Man is forc'd to speak of himself: Truth, if it be to his own praise, will be rejected as Falshood, or at least censured for Vanity; and if he blame himself, this will be suspected as designed only to extort a Commendation from others. And yet there are certain times and occasions, in which the wisest and best Men have thought it requisite to speak with great freedom and openness of themselves. There is a Deference owing to Authority, and a Reverence due to Years, and therefore ancient Men, and Men in Power, may speak as we say, *with Authority*; and any Man may speak in his own vindication what would not become him in another case: Every Man has a right to defend his own Innocence by all lawful means, and to speak Truth cannot be unlawful, tho' it be in his own commendation; nor can there be any indecency in it, when it is forced from him, for the good, not only of himself, but of others, who may suffer by the Scandal thrown upon him. All these circumstances concurred in *St. Paul's* case, who had the Authority of an Apostle, and the Reverence due to *Paul the Aged*,

and the Interest of Souls to plead for what he yet terms *the folly* of commending himself in his own necessary Vindication. *Plutarch* in a set discourse upon this Subject, determines, that a Man may praise himself, when it is necessary for his own defence, and when he may benefit others by it. ^y *Nestor* speaks of himself with as great commendation, as he could have spoken of any other Man; but when the Authority and Reverence due to his Age warranted that Freedom, and the necessity of Affairs required it of him, it was not only allowable, but very proper and requisite. ^z *Tully* observes, that he might claim this privilege from his Old Age. ^{*} *Livy* says, that no Man ever was praised better, or with more Truth, than *Scipio Africanus* was praised by himself; and that no Man was offended at it, because he spoke in his own vindication. ^a *Brutus* speaks of himself in very high terms, and justifies his doing so. And *Socrates* himself, at his Tryal, speaks very freely in his own commendation, which has never been mentioned to his dispraise, but as an argument of his Courage and Innocence.

^y Hom. Il. x.

^z *Nihil necesse est mihi de meipso dicere, quanquam est id quidem senile, atatique nostra conceditur. Videtisne ut apud Homerum sapissimè Nestor de virtutibus suis pradicet? Tertiam enim jam aetatem hominum vixerat, nec erat ei verendum, ne vera de se pradicans nimis videretur aut insolens aut loquax.* Cic. de Senect.

^{*} *Orationem adeò magnificam de rebus ab se gestis exorsus est, ut satis constaret, neminem unquam neque melius neque veriùs laudatum esse. Dicebantur enim ab eodem animo, ingenioque, à quo gesta erant; & aurium fastidium aberat, quia pro periculo, non in gloriam referebantur.* Liv. lib. xxxviii.

^a *Juvat enim magnificè loqui, & certè decet adversus ignorantes, quid pro quoque timendum, aut à quoque petendum sit.* Brut. ad Cic. Epist.

^b *Virgil*

^b *Virgil* makes *Aeneas* and *Turnus* speak of themselves in such a manner as is hardly reconcileable to the Rules of Decency of our Times. Mr. *Dryden*, in his Translation, saw it necessary to soften his Expressions, that they might be more suitable to our Customs and Manners. But certainly, if this were not agreeable to his own Age, it was at least to that Notion which *Virgil* had of the Age in which *Aeneas* lived, or else so great a Master of *Decorum* would never have put such words into the mouth of his Hero. Yet these very words he had from ^c *Homer*, who makes them to be spoken by *Ulysses*. *Servius* says, Heroes were wont thus to speak.

^d Poets likewise assumed a liberty of speaking bold Expressions concerning themselves, upon pretence that they were acted by some Divine Power, and therefore were called Prophets; which is an argument that in the common Opinion of Men, inspired Writers might use such Forms of Speech as would not be proper nor decent for others to use. And this Liberty was taken by Orators as well as Poets, when the occasion seemed to require it, as may be observed in ^e *Isocrates*. For the ancient Orators too, by *Longinus's* Observation, pretended to something more than humane, and would be thought to speak by some kind of impulse; upon which account, this Liberty

^b Sum Pius *Aeneas*—

—Famâ super æthera notus. *Æn.* i.

The Good *Aeneas* I am call'd, a Name,
While Fortune favour'd, not unknown to Fame.

Turnus ego haud ulli veterum virtute secundus

Devoveo. *Æn.* ii.

I *Turnus*, not the least of all my Name,

Devote my Soul—

^c Καὶ μὲν κλέος ἕσσον ἔχῃ. *Odyss.* ix.

^d Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jovis ira nec ignis

Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.—*Ovid. Met.* l. 15.

Exegi monumentum ære perennius.—*Horat. carm.* l. iii. *Od.* 30.

^e Panegr. & Panathen.

might be allowed them. The *Ram* of ^f *Arrian* can hardly be excused: for he speaks of himself more like a Stoick, than like an Historian, or like a modest Man.

But it may well be thought needless for me to have used so many words on this Subject, when there is so little occasion for any Objection of this nature in the Holy Scriptures, and where-ever there can be any pretence for it, it has been considered in its proper place: but I thought it might not be labour ill bestowed, to shew here besides, how bad Criticks they are that can object at this rate. I will say farther, that the Passage, concerning the Dog which followed *Tobias* (which has given occasion to unwary and unskilful Men to insult with so much Scorn over a Book that is very useful, tho' not of Divine Inspiration) is not only innocent, but agreeable to the best Patterns of Antiquity, & *Homer* and *Virgil*; who thought it a very proper and natural Ornament of their Poems to describe Dogs following their Masters; *Homer* speaking of *Telemachus*, and *Virgil* of *Evander*. And * *Servius* produceth an Example of the same thing out of the *Roman* History. But there was this particular Reason for it in *Tobias's* case, that as *Jacob* express'd the meanness of his condition by saying, *with my staff I passed over this Jordan*, Gen. xxxii. 10. So *Tobit's*

^f Ἄλλ' ἐκείνο ἀναγράφω, ὅτι ἐμοὶ πατέρες τε, καὶ ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἀρχαί, οἵδε οἱ λόγοι εἰσὶν τε, καὶ διὰ νεῦ ἐτι ἐγγύοντο καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ ᾧ ἔκ ἀπαξιώ, ἐμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φανῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἶπερ ἐν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρῳ τῷ ἐν ταῖς ὁπλοῖς. Arr. de Expedit. Alexandr. l. i.

^g Ἀμα τῷ γε δύο καὶ ἀεὶ ἀεὶ ἐποντο.

Odyss. ii. v. 11.

Nec non & gemini custodes limine ab alto

Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur herilem.

Aeneid. viii.

* Hoc & in Homero lectum est—& in Historia Romana, quae ait: Syphax inter duas canes stans Scipionem appellavit. Serv.

calami-

calamitous and low estate was implied by his Son's having no company in so long a journey but a Stranger, no attendance but a Dog following him; which therefore is mentioned both at his setting out, and at his Return, *Tob. v. 16. xi. 4.*

IV. Asto the Method used in the Holy Scriptures, there is no reason to expect that Prophecies should be written according to the Order of time in which they were deliver'd, or that Histories should be digested into Diaries or Annals, since there may be Reasons, whether known or unknown to us, why they should be otherwise plac'd: And thus the Lyrick Poets, ^h who pretended to Enthusiasm, and an Imitation, as it were, of Prophecy, do not confine themselves to observe any Order of Time. Some things last foretold might be first to be fulfill'd; or some things were more or less remarkable, or concern'd the *Jews* more or less than others; but generally in the Prophetical Books of Scripture, what concerns the same Subject is put together, though foretold, or falling out, at different times, that the clearer and more distinct view may be had of it. This, as ⁱ St. *Jerom* observes, is the Cause of divers Transpositions in point of Time, in the Prophecies of *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*; and ^k he takes notice, that *Daniel* having set down the Prophecies, which had relation to the several Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belshazzar*, *Darius*, or *Cyrus*, according to the Order of Time, afterwards declares the Revelations that were made to him, that had no Dependence upon the times in which they were made, but were written for the benefit of Posterity. But the several Transpositions in the Scripture are sufficiently accounted for by Commentators. And it must be observ'd, that the Sacred Writers mention no more of

^h Vid. Hieron. ad Hieremiæ cap. 21. 25.

ⁱ Hieron. ad Ezech. cap. 29, 30.

^k Hieron. ad Dan. c. 7.

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Civil Affairs, than was necessary to their purpose; and therefore in many things they refer to the Histories then extant, for a fuller account of them: their Design was not to write a complete History of all Events, but they confine themselves to such as were most fit for them to take notice of, and keep within the compass of their proper business.

It was expedient that the same Doctrines should be repeated in divers places of Scripture, and interspersed with other things, according to no certain Art or Method, because this prevents their being corrupted or falsify'd as they might have been, if they had been all reduced to several distinct Heads, and plac'd according to the Rules of Art. If one Prophet repeats what another Prophet had said, this is to give it a new Confirmation, to revive the Remembrance, and shew the Certainty and Importance of it. It is ordinary in the best Authors not only to find the same things repeated in divers places of their Works, but to meet with them repeated in the very same Words: thus *Isocrates*, *Xenophon* and *Demosthenes* transcribe in one part of their Works what they have written in another; but none, I think, so frequently as *Demosthenes*: though ¹ *Ulpian* has observ'd, that this was an usual thing with the Ancient Writers. Which is notorious in *Homer*, who was herein followed by *Virgil*, as *Demosthenes* was by *Cicero*. *Dionysius Halicarnassaeus*, who was a skilful Critick, as well as an excellent Historian, begins several Books of his *Roman Antiquities*, in the same Words, with which he concluded the foregoing. It was customary likewise with the Philosophers, παραδείν, or to allude to the Verses of *Homer*, and to apply them with little variation upon all occasions, as may be seen frequently in *Diogenes Laertius*.

¹ Σαυηθές γδ τῆτο ποιῆν τοῖς παλαιοῖς. Ulp. Enarr. Orat. Demosthen. contr. Midiam.

All the Cavils therefore that are made against the Style of Scripture proceed from Ignorance of Antiquity, and from Rashness in judging of Ancient times and Foreign Countries by our own. Whoever would either delight or profit, must speak and act in some measure according to the Genius of the People with whom he converses: and if he will but read the Scriptures, with the same Candor and Respect with which we read the Writings of Humane Authors, and consider the Times, and Persons, and the Occasions upon which they were written, there is nothing that can seem harsh or improper either in the Words or Actions of the Persons inspired (for it was the manner of those Countries to speak by their Actions almost as much as in Words.) If we will but observe the Circumstances in which the several parts of the Scriptures were written, we shall find cause to admire the Simplicity, and Plainness, and Modesty of the Style of the Scriptures.

In many Books of the Scriptures, the Style is sublime and elegant, beyond any thing to be found in other Writings, and yet as natural as if it could not have been otherwise express'd; and this is the true Excellency of Style, that it be plain and natural, and yet eloquent. *Longinus* gives a high Character of *Moses's* Style in a Book, the Design whereof is to represent the most perfect Idea of Eloquence; Indeed, such is the Fitness both in Verse and Prose of the Words and Style of *Moses*, so admirably suited to the Subject upon all occasions; as if he had been to prescribe a Pattern of true Eloquence, as well as to enact Laws. *Paronomasia*, which is a Figure of Speech frequently us'd by *Isaiah*, and other Writers of the Old Testament, is an *Attick* Idiotism, and was very common in the Ancient Greek Authors, from whom *Ennius*, *Plautus*,

^m Ἀγίσιον πόλεμον πολεμίζεν, Hom. Il. iii. v. 435.
ⁿ Ὁδ' ἀγορᾶς ἀγρόδουον, Il. ii. v. 395.

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Plautus, *Terence*, and other *Latin Authors* had it. *H. Stephens* has observ'd, that there is a great Resemblance in *Herodotus* to the Style of the Scriptures. *Herodotus* had *Homer* in his view throughout his History, and *Homer's* Expressions are the same with those us'd in the Scriptures, in many instances; as particularly, when he so often mentions the Children of the *Trojans*, and the Children of the *Greeks*, as the Scriptures mention *the children of Israel*; and other *Greek Authors* say, the Children of the Physicians, and the Children of the Philosophers, as the Scriptures say, *the children of the bride-chamber*, and the *children of light*. ⁿ *Grotius* compares *Isaiah* to *Demosthenes*, a sublime, but a most natural and judicious Writer: the same Author compares *Ezekiel* to *Homer* for the Beauty and Nobleness of his Style. ^o *Mr. Cowley* compares the Prophets, especially *Isaiah*, to *Pindar*: but of *Pindar* he says, that if a man should undertake to translate him word for word, it would be thought that one Mad-man had translated another. For which he gives this Reason, that we must consider in *Pindar* the great difference of time betwixt his Age and ours, which changes, as in Pictures, at least the Colours of Poetry; the no less difference betwixt the Religions and Customs of our Countries, and a thousand Particularities of Places, Persons and Manners, which do but confusedly

Εὐρημα εὐρηκα, *Herodot.* l. vii. c. 10. Μεγέθη μέλας, & μέγας, *Pausan.* passim. Πλήθη πολλοί, id. *Achaic.* p. 220. ἰδοὶ οἶδα, id. *Corinth.* p. 75. Βαῖον, p. 307. Μεγέθη μέλιστα, *Arr. Exped. Alex.* l. v. Πλήθη πλεῖστοι, id. *Rer. Indic.* lib.

—Feroq; Ornatur ferro. *En. Annal.* 2.

Sudantes atque Sedentes, *Annal.* 7

Haud doctis Dicteis certantes sed maledicteis, *Anal.* 8.

Handquaquam quenquam semper fortuna secuta est. *Ib.*

Incœptum amentium, non amantium: vivere vitam: servire servitutem, &c. *apud Latinos.* Vid. *Mer. Caufaub. de Ling. Heb.*

^a *Grot.* ad 4. *Reg.* xix. 2. & ad *Ezech.* initio.

^o *Pref. to Pindarick Odes, and Notes upon Pind. Ode on Isai.* xxxiv.

appear

appear to our Eyes at so great a Distance ; and lastly, we must consider that our Ears are Strangers to the Musick of his Numbers, which sometimes (especially in Songs and Odes) almost without any thing else, makes an excellent Poet. And of David he observes, that the best Translators have been so far from doing Honour, or at least Justice to that Divine Poet, that methinks; says he, they revile him worse than Shimei. And Buchanan himself comes, in his Opinion, no less short of David, than his Country does of Judea. Yet *Isaiah* and the rest of the Prophets, and the *Psalms*, are translated into our Language word for word, as far as it is possible for one Language to be thus render'd into another : and notwithstanding all the Differences of Time, and Place, and Customs, and Persons, no sensible Man reads them in the *English* Tongue, but he must acknowledge that their Style, with all these Disadvantages, is truly great and excellent. Whereas ^P there are none of the Heathen Authors, that are so much esteem'd, which, if they were literally translated, as the Scriptures are, would bear the Reading, but they would appear ridiculous and impossible to be understood. For the Spirit, and Genius, and peculiar Idioms of most Tongues being so very different one from another, and depending upon the Customs and Humours of the People of several Countries, it was the evident Care and Providence of God, to cause great part of the Scriptures, though written by so many different Men, and at such distant times, and some Books of them in the earlier Ages of the World, to be penn'd in such a Language and Style, as is most natural, and which, without any want of Art, exceeds the most artificial and study'd Eloquence in sublime

^P *Quod si cui non videtur lingua gratiam interpretatione mutari, Homerum ad verbum exprimat in Latinum. Plus aliquid dicam : eandem in sua lingua prosa verbis interpretetur, videbit ordinem ridiculum: & Poetam eloquentissimum vix loquentem.* Hieron. Præf. in Chron. Euseb.

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and noble Thoughts and Expressions, and in all the Beauties and Ornaments of Speech: and yet, which in all the necessary points of Salvation is easie to be understood, under all the Disadvantages of a Verbal Translation, by Men of ordinary Capacities, who live so many Ages after. The Prophecies of *Isaiah* cannot be read, or heard, or thought of, without being mov'd by them: with what Life then, with what Zeal and Flame must they have been deliver'd? And what a mighty Blessing was such a Prophet to his own Age, and to all succeeding Generations? Of Royal Blood, and of a Style and Behaviour suitable to his Birth; of Divine Virtues, and of Divine Eloquence! He declares things, which were not to be fulfill'd till many Ages afterwards, as plainly as if he had seen them before his Eyes, and would make all others to see them; he speaks of Christ as clearly, as if with *Simeon* he had had his Saviour in his Arms, or with the Wise-men had been kneeling down before him, and presenting him with more precious Gifts, than any they had to offer; and describes his Passion as fully, as if he had follow'd him through every part of it, and having been crucify'd with him, had been just entring with him into Paradise. If this be thought a Digression from my Subject, I hope it may easily be excused: for who can speak of *Isaiah*, without a Digression, when Men choose the Food of Swine, and trample upon Pearls, as things of no value; as if he and the other Prophets had always the hard fate, to preach to the *Rulers of Sodom*, and the *People of Gomorrha*.

But if the Style of the Scriptures be not in all places alike excellent and exact, let it be consider'd, that

1. The same Style is not suitable to all Subjects, and the Style and Dialect is different, according to the Difference of the Matter, or of the Persons, for whose use it was immediately design'd. What concerns the *Assyrian Monarchy* in the Prophet *Daniel*, is in the

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Chaldee Tongue, and what relates directly to the *Jews* is in the *Hebrew*. Part of *Ezra* is in *Chaldee*, being a Relation of Matter of Fact contained in the *Chaldee* Chronicles; and *Jerem. x. 11.* is in the same Tongue, that the *Jews* might reject the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans* in their Language, and openly profess their own Abhorrence of it. And as upon these occasions the Language of Scripture is chang'd, with respect to the Subject and the Persons concern'd, so the Style must be sometimes alter'd upon the same account.

2. Artificial Strains of Rhetorick, whereby the Passions are mov'd to the utmost Heighth, were very necessary to gain a present point, and carry a Cause by a violent and sudden Transport, before Reason could interpose. But Religion being to be propounded upon reasonable Motives, there could be no need of Rhetorick, when the Evidence of those Miracles by which it was establish'd, afforded so many other more certain and powerful means of Persuasion. The Scriptures are not written in the *enticing words of man's wisdom*, but in Truth and Simplicity, and therefore might well have been without any Advantages of Eloquence, as needing no such helps to recommend them to serious and impartial Minds: And tho' God has been pleas'd to condescend so far to the Infirmities of Men, as to convey very much of his Reveal'd Will to us, in such a Style, as for its own sake is highly to be esteem'd and admir'd; yet it was fit that other parts of the Scriptures should have the bare Force and Evidence of Truth only, to convince Men, that it might appear that our Religion was propagated not by any Arts of humane Eloquence, but by its own Worth and Excellency: For Eloquence was not used, where it would have been most necessary, if any humane means could be so, in asserting and propagating the Divine Truth. In the propagation of the Gospel, all the Eloquence, as well as the Power, and Prejudices,
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and Vices of Mankind were combined against it, and yet less * Elegancy and Accuracy of Style was employ'd by the Apostles and Evangelists, than had been before used by *Moses* and the Prophets, who yet had nothing which seem'd so strange and wonderful to deliver. Which is one great Argument of the Power and Efficacy of the Gospel, that it could prevail so much against all the Opposition in the World, only by telling a plain Truth, and in the plainest manner. For where the thing is evident, the fewest and plainest Words are best, as in Mathematical Demonstrations, it is enough if Men make themselves to be understood: this likewise was all that the ⁹ Apostles aim'd at, their Cause and Doctrine was so certain and demonstrable, that any Words, which did but fully and clearly express their Meaning, were sufficient for their purpose; their Rhetorick lay in the things themselves, not in words: there is no great Art required to prove that to any Man, which he sees with his Eyes; and therefore as the power of Miracles was greater under the Gospel, than under the Law, so there was less need of Eloquence in the New Testament than in the Old. *Yet it cannot be deny'd, as a ^r learned Critick has declar'd, that St. Paul, in some kind, and upon some subjects, is as eloquent as ever Man was; not inferior to Demosthenes (in whose Writings he believes that Apostle had been much conversant) or Æschines, or any other*

* Nos quotiescunque solæcismes, aut tale quid annotamus, non Apostolum pulsamus, ut malevoli criminantur, sed magis Apostoli assertores sumus, quod Hebraus ex Hebrais, absque Rhetorici nitore Sermonis, & verborum compositione, & eloquij venustate, nunquam ad fidem Christi totum mundum traducere valuisset, nisi evangelizasset eum non in sapientiâ verbi, sed in virtute Dei. Hieron. ad Ephes. iii.

⁹ Τὴν ὃ γλῶτταν ἰδιωλύοντες τῇ γε μὴ πρὸς τὴ Σωτηρίᾳ αὐτοῖς διδασκαλίᾳ θεία, καὶ ἀγαθοποιῶν δυνάμει θαυμάσιες, τὸ μὴ ἐν περφοίᾳ καὶ τέχνῃ λόγων τὰ τῆ διδασκαλίας μαθήματα πρεσβύειν ἕτε ἡδισταυ, ἕτε ἐνεχέρειν. Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 24.

^r Mer. Casaub. of Enthuf. c. 4.

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anciently most admired. *St. Chrysostom*, a good Judge, often commends *St. Paul's* Eloquence in the highest Terms.

3. It is reasonable to believe, that the Scriptures may be written in the Words and Phrases of the Penmen of the several parts of them, and that the Holy Ghost might permit them to use their own Style, so directing them still, and over-ruling them in every Word and Sentence, that it should infallibly express his own full Sense and Meaning, and speak the Truth which he inspired. And therefore, tho' there be divers Styles in the Scriptures, yet this is no Prejudice to the Authority and Certainty of them. *Isaiah*, for instance, being of the Blood-Royal, and educated at Court, may write in a more refin'd and lofty Style; and *Amos*, who was brought up among the herdsmen of *Tekoa*, may speak in a more humble strain, and fetch his Metaphors from lower and meaner things, and yet the Sense and Substance of both may be from the Holy Ghost, and as exactly true and infallible, as if every Word and Syllable were dictated by him. But this has been already considered under its proper head.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures.

Whatever Uncertainty there can be suppos'd to be, concerning the Canon of the Holy Scriptures, or the Catalogue and Number of Books of Divine Revelation, this ought to be made no Objection against the Certainty of Divine Revelation it self, or against the Authority of those Books of Scripture, which are universally acknowledg'd and receiv'd by

all Churches. For if this be a true way of arguing, then whatever we are ignorant of, must be an Argument against the Certainty of what we know; and by consequence, no Man can be certain of any thing, since the wisest Man is ignorant of so many things, that he knows very little in comparison of what he is ignorant of. And as to the matter in hand, there is scarce any Author of great Note and Fame, but Critics have had Disputes concerning the number of his genuine Works; and yet this has never been thought any prejudice to such as are allowed by all to be genuine. Would not that Man make himself ridiculous, who should reject the *Philippicks* of Tully, or *Virgil's Æneis*, as spurious, because other Books, either doubtful, or counterfeit, have pass'd under the Names of these two Authors? If some Books have been disputed, the rest certainly are genuine beyond all dispute, because they have never been called into question or doubt.

Now if these Books only were of Divine Revelation, concerning which there has never been any Dispute, they contain all things necessary to be believed and practised; and as to the rest, concerning which there has been any Controversie, tho' they be exceeding useful to explain divers things, which we find in these, and perhaps to teach us some things (not essential to our Religion, nor necessary to Salvation) which are not to be found elsewhere: yet they are not absolutely necessary to be received, because whatever Doctrines are absolutely necessary, they are to be found fully and plainly delivered in those Books of Scripture, which have ever been received without contradiction or dispute. Many Men were undoubtedly saved, before the writing of these controverted Books, nay, before the writing of any Books at all; Writings being no farther necessary, than as they are necessary to convey the knowledge of what is written; when the things now written could be as well known

known without writing, Books were not necessary: and tho' for after Ages it became necessary, that the Prophets, and Apostles, and Evangelists, should consign their Doctrine to writing, yet no more of their Writings can be absolutely necessary to be known by us, than what may be sufficient to instruct us in the ways of Salvation. It is the infinite Goodness and Mercy of God to afford us more than is absolutely necessary for our spiritual and eternal Life, as he has done for our natural, and it is a great sin in any Man to reject any means of Salvation or Instruction, which God has been pleased to allow: but still that Man would sustain his natural Life and Health, who should think all, that is not necessary to the support of it, *common* or *unclean*, and not fit to be used for Food. And if a Man, without any of his own fault or neglect, should come to the knowledge only of the uncontroverted Books, he would find them abundantly sufficient to answer all the ends of Revelation, and to procure his Salvation. It cannot be denied, but that one infallible Authority is as great a Security, as never so many could be: but the same Doctrines are taught in several places of Scripture, and we ought to be thankful to God for it, that he has been pleased to furnish us with so much more than is absolutely necessary, and to repeat the same things in sundry places, and in divers manners, for our farther instruction and confirmation in the Faith: tho' it would be absur'd and wicked to say, that he who believes all the Points of necessary Faith, upon the Authority of any one Book of Scripture, has no sufficient means of Salvation, unless he likewise believe them upon the Authority of all the rest.

Not that I suppose any wise and good Man can now find any cause to doubt of any Book in the Old or New Testament, whether it be genuine or no; but to suppose the most and the worst that can be supposed, if those Books, which at any time have been cal-

led in question, were not only dubious, but certainly spurious, the remaining Books, which were never doubted of, are sufficient for all the necessary ends and purposes of a Revelation: and therefore this ought to be no Objection against the Authority of the Scriptures, that the Authority of some Books has been formerly Matter of Controversie.

I shall enter upon no Discourse concerning the Apocryphal Books, the Authority whereof has been so often and so effectually disproved by Protestants, that the most learned Papists have now little to say for them, but are forced only to fly to the Authority of their Church, which is in effect to beg the thing in question, or to beg something as hard to be granted, viz. the Infallibility of the Church of Rome. But I shall here engage in no Controversie of that nature. Both Protestants and Papists are, generally speaking, agreed, that the Books of Moses, and the Prophets in the Old Testament, and the Writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles in the New, are of Divine Authority; and if this be so, the Christian Religion must be true, whether there be, or be not others of the same nature, and of equal Authority. These Books, in the main, have already been proved to be genuine, and without any material corruption or alteration. I shall now only propose such general Considerations, as may be sufficient to obviate the Objections.

The agreement between the Jews and Samaritans in the *Pentateuch*, is a clear evidence for its Authority. And tho' there were many and great Idolatries committed in the Kingdom of Judah, yet by the good Providence of God, there never was such a total Apostacy in the People, nor so long a Succession of Idolatrous Kings, as that the Books, either of the Law or the Prophets, can be supposed to have been suppress'd or alter'd. For three Years under Rehoboam, they walked in the way of David and Solomon, 2 Chron. xi. 17.

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and tho' afterwards he forsook the Law of the Lord, and all Israel with him, yet both he, and the Princes, humbled themselves at the Message and Declaration of the Prophet *Shemaiah*, ch. xii. 6. and his Reign was in all but seventeen Years, ch. xii. 1, 13. *Abijam* was a wicked King, but he reigned no longer than three Years, 1 Kings xv. 2. And tho' his Heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the Heart of David his Father, ch. x. 3. yet both he, and his People, relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers, and therefore gained a miraculous Victory over the Israelites, 2 Chron. xiii. 10, 12, 18. *Asa* the third from Solomon, and *Jehoshaphat* his Son, were great Reformers; and *Asa* reigned one and forty Years, and *Jehoshaphat* five and twenty Years, 2 Chron. xvi. 13. xx. 31. The two next Kings in Succession, did evil in the sight of the Lord, but their Reigns were short; *Jehoram* reigned eight Years, and *Ahaziah* but one, 2 Chron. xxi. 20. xxii. 2. During the interval of six Years under the usurpation of *Athaliah*, the People could not be greatly corrupted: for she was hateful to them, as *Jehoram* her Husband had been before her, and they readily joined with *Jehoiada* in slaying her, and in restoring the Worship of God, 2 Chron. xxii. *Joash*, the Son of *Ahaziah*, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of *Jehoiada*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. We are sure that he reigned well three and twenty Years, 2 Kings xii. 6. and probably much longer; for *Jehoiada* lived to a very great Age, 2 Chron. xxiv. 15. *Amaziah* his Son, reigned twenty nine Years, and has the same Character, and with the same abatement, that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. or yet not like David his Father: he did according to all things, as *Joash* his Father did, 2 Kings xiv. 3. *Uzziah*, Son to *Amaziah*, reigned fifty two Years, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his Father *Amaziah* did; and he sought God in the days of *Zachariah*,

riah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 45. and after he was seized with the Leprosie for invading the Priest's Office, the Administration of Affairs was in the hands of his Son *Jotham*, ver. 21. who reigned sixteen Years, and imitated the good part of his Father's Reign, *ch.* xxvii. 2. *Ahaz* was wicked, and an Idolater, but he also reigned only sixteen Years, *chap.* xxviii. 1. and his Son *Hezekiah* wrought a great Reformation, who reigned twenty nine Years, *chap.* xxix. 1. *Manasses* was much given to Idolatry in the former part of his Reign; but after his Captivity in *Babylon*, he was very zealous against it, *chap.* xxxiii. 15, 16. he was no more than twelve Years old when he began his Reign, *ver.* 1. and during his tender Years, he could not be the cause of great Corruptions; his Captivity was very short; for he was soon brought again to his Kingdom upon his Repentance, *ver.* 11, 12. and he reigned fifty and five Years in *Jerusalem*, *ver.* 1. having not been detained a ^a full Year in *Babylon*; but was carried into Captivity in the twenty second Year of his Reign, and was a Penitent thirty three Years, as the *Rabbins* compute. *Amon* imitated the ill part of his Father's Reign, but his own continued no longer than two Years, *chap.* xxxiii. 21. The next was *Josiah*, in whose time the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, which must be the Book of *Moses's* own hand-writing; for it is evident, that a Book of the Law could be no such rare thing at that time in *Jerusalem*, as to be taken so much notice of, unless it had been that Book, which was laid up in the side of the Ark, and was to be transcribed by every King. It seems, that Book of the Law had been purposely hid, to preserve it from the attempts of Idolaters, who it was feared might have a design to destroy it; for if it had only lain by neglected, the finding of it could have been no such surprizing thing, because the place in the Temple

^a Usser. Annal. A. M. 3327.

was well known, where it was wont to be kept in the side of the Ark, and where they might have sought for it: but it was probably at that time, supposed to have been utterly lost; and its being found in the Ruines of the Temple, which was built for the observation of it, and where it ought to have been kept with the greatest care, as a most inestimable Treasure; the veneration which *Josiah* had for so sacred a Writing, and the happy and unexpected recovery of it, when it had been disregarded and almost lost, through the Iniquity of his Predecessors; these Considerations could not but exceedingly move a Mind so tender and affectionately pious, as that King's, when he received the Law under *Moses's* own hand, sent him, as he believed, by God himself, and delivered to him, as it were, a-new from Heaven: Tho' there could not but be many Copies remaining in the hands of *Jeremiah*, and of other Prophets and pious Men. *Hilkiah the High Priest said unto Shaphan the Scribe, * I have found the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord,* 2 King. xxii. 8. the Book which was deposited there, but had been long missing. But eleven Years, six Months, and ten days after *Josiah's* Reign, *Jehoiachin* was carried captive to *Babylon*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 2, 5, 9. till which time there were always Prophets, frequent Reforms, and never any succession of Idolatrous Kings, which continued for a long time together; very few Kings were idolatrous throughout their whole Reigns, and those that were, reigned but a short time. Some manifest Judgment was constantly sent, to prevent the evil Effects of a wicked Reign: as the *Jews* never were without Prophets, either before the Captivity, or under it, so *Isaiah*, *Hosea* and

* *Divinum illum librum quem Moses, vir ille Dei, scripsit, quem hactenus quasivimus, sed non nisi nunc tandem inveni. Vid. Abarben. Dissert. apud Buxtorf. Catalect. p. 359.*

Micah, lived in the Times of the worst of their Kings, *Abaz* and *Manasses*; and they prophesied for very many Years, to oppose their Wickedness. *Isaiah* was slain by *Manasses*, but his Prophecies were preserved, as well as the Law, and the Writings of the rest of the Prophets.

It has been ^b proved, that the *Pentateuch*, and the Books of the Prophets, written before the Captivity, were preserved amongst the *Jews* till their return; and it is acknowledg'd by those who are of another opinion, that *Ezra*, who composed the Canon, did it by a Prophetick Spirit, or had the assistance of Prophets in the doing it. ^c *Josephus* says, that their Books, after the time of *Artaxerxes*, are not of equal Authority with those before his time, for want of a certain succession of Prophets. And since the *Jews* admitted no Writings as inspired, into the Canon after *Malachi's* Prophecy, this shews their sincerity and exactness in examining the Truth and Authority of such Writings, as they admitted into their Canon of Scripture. The Pharisees made the Commandment of God of no effect by their Traditions, but never durst presume to impose them under the notion and character of a Book of the Scriptures. The modern *Jews*, in like manner, never dared to pretend to new Books of Revelation, but have constantly adhered to the old.

And what inducement could the *Jews* have to receive these Books into their Canon, of which it consists, rather than the Apocryphal Books, but the evidence of their Divine Authority? which is a thing more especially remarkable in some Books. Why should they receive certain Books under the Names of *Solomon*, *Esther*, *Daniel* and *Ezra*, but not admit into the Canon others going under the same Names, but because of the difference in their Authority? The

^b Book 1. Part 2. c. 6. and 9.

^c *Joseph. Cont. Apion. lib. i.*

Song of Solomon, tho' it have not the Name either of God or of Lord in it, has ever been receiv'd for canonical, because they were assured, that it was penned by Solomon, and that it is to be understood in a^d mystical sense, of the Messiah and the Church. For in divers places, it can with no congruity be taken literally, as where the Eyes of the Spouse are compared to the *Fish-pools of Heshbon*, and her Nose to the *Tower of Lebanon*, chap. vii. 4. And for Christ to be represented as an Husband to his Church, is no unusual thing in other Books of Scripture. So shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty : for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him, Psal. xlv. 11. For thy maker is thine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name : and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole Earth, shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God, Isa. liv, 5, 6. But the *Song of Solomon* being a continued Allegory of Christ and his Church, it is no more to be expected, that the Name of God should be mention'd there, than in the Parables in the Gospel. The Book of *Esther* has likewise the same Objection to it, which may be as easily answer'd; for this containing an historical Narrative, nothing is related, but what was said and done by *Esther*, *Mordecai*, and other Persons therein mention'd; and the Name of God or Lord having not been used by them in all that Business, it is no Prejudice, but a real Advantage and just Commendation of this Book, that the strict and necessary Truth only is related, as it was in Fact, and as it stood recorded in the Chronicles of the Kings of *Media* and *Persia*, (chap. ii. 23. x. 2) For what was not contain'd in those Records, was transacted between *Esther* and *Mordecai* by *Hatach* one of the King's Chamberlains,

^d Targum. in Cantic. iv. 5. vii. 3.

and others that attended upon her, (*chap. iv. 5, 12, 15.*) And that high Veneration, which the *Jews* had for the ^e *Seven Names* of God, might be the Cause, that none of them were mention'd in a Message with which Heathens were entrusted: for it was esteem'd a Prophanation of any of these Names, when they were but written by a Gentile, or if a Book of the Law were found in his Possession. ^f All care was taken, that the Heathen should not apply the name of God to their Idols. The great Corruptions among the *Jews*, by their Conversation with the *Gentiles*, which *Nehemiah* reproveth, might be the occasion, why this Opinion and Practice then first prevail'd among some, at least, of the devouter sort: for we find *Nehemiah*, using the Name of God neither to *Artaxerxes*, (*chap. ii. 3, 5, 7, 8.*) nor to *Sanballat*, (*chap. vi. 3, 8.*) tho' the Name both of *God* and *Lord* being mention'd in the Decree of *Cyrus*, was from thence transmitted into all the subsequent publick Acts relating to the Building of the Temple; and could not be omitted by *Ezra*. But how it came to pass, that the Name of God was not mention'd in such an Exigence of Affairs is a Question, which concerns not the Authority of the Book of *Esther*, but the Disposition and Demeanour of the Persons spoken of in the Narrative. We find Expressions of Humiliation and Devotion, *Sackcloth* and *Asbes*, and *Fasting*, mention'd (*chap. iv. 3, 16.*) and the Faith of *Mordecai*, and his Dependence upon God, is signify'd *ver. 13, 14.* And whatever might be the occasion, why in a case of so much Danger, the Name of God was not publicly used, a strict adhering to Truth has been the cause of its Omission, in a Book which relates Matter of Fact, as it was, with no such Addition of Ornaments as to represent it better than it really was in it self. The *Septuagint* in their

^e Maimon. de Fundament. Legis. c. 6. §. 2. 10. cum Vorst. Not.

^f Hieron. ad Marcell. Tom. 3. p. 94.

Translation have frequently inserted the Name of *God* and *Lord*; so has *Josephus* in his History, and the Author of the Apocryphal Book of *Esther*, with a Prayer of *Mordecai*, and another of *Esther*. But these Additions being found neither in the *Hebrew* nor the *Chaldee*, were never taken into the Canon. So strict regard have the Jews always had to the Divine Authority of their Canon of Scripture, that no Objections, however obvious and plausible, have mov'd them at any time to depart from it, or to make any Alteration in it. Why should they receive the Books of those whom their Fore-fathers had slain, and those very Books for which they slew them, but upon the clearest evidence? It is certain they could be possess'd with no Prejudice in their Favour, but with very many against the Books of such Authors. To give another instance: The Book of *Ruth* contains the Affairs and Transactions of a particular Family, of no great Consequence, as one might imagine at first view, and yet it has been preserv'd with as much Care, and as constantly receiv'd as the rest. There is little reason, upon humane Considerations, why a Relation concerning that Family should be inserted into the Canon of Scripture, rather than one concerning any other. But the Lineage of the *Messias* is set forth in it, and that was a sufficient Reason why it should be inserted; and therefore by the divine Wisdom and Providence, neither the Emulation and Envy of other Families, nor any other Cause or Accident, hinder'd its Reception and Preservation amongst the other inspired Books. And in that History, there is an account not very honourable for *David's* Family, in deriving his Descent from *Phares* of *Thamar*, and shewing that his great Grandmother was a *Moabites*; the *Moabites* being a People, who had an indelible Mark of Infamy fix'd upon them by the Law of *Moses*, Deut. xxiii. 3.

II. As the *Pentateuch* was ever acknowledg'd by the People of *Israel* after their Separation from the Tribe of *Judah*; so if they rejected the Writings of the Prophets, it must have been because many of them were written by Prophets, who were of the two Tribes, and all the Prophets of *Israel* owning the Temple of *Jerusalem* to be the true place of Worship, the *Israelites* and *Samaritans* must have great Prejudices against them upon that account; and the Prophe-tick Books likewise containing divers Prophecies against the Ten Tribes for their corrupt way of Worship, it cannot be expected, that they should receive the Books of any of the Prophets in the same manner as they did those of *Moses*. Yet in the Book of *Tobit*, who was of the Tribe of *Neptali*, we find the Prophet *Amos* cited, ch. ii. 6. and *Jonas*, ch. xiv. 4, 8. and in general the Prophets who had foretold the rebuilding of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem*, ver. 5. He must mean *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*. The Books of *Samuel*, *David*, and *Solomon*, had less regard paid to them upon Reasons of State, by the Tribes who follow'd the Revolt of *Jeroboam*: yet when ^f *Joseph Scaliger* sent to the *Samaritans* for the Canticles and the Book of Psalms in their Language; as well as for the Book of the Law, and of *Joshua*, they promis'd to send him them; notwithstanding that in the Psalms so frequent and solemn mention is made of *Jerusalem*, Mount *Sion*, and the Temple. And it is prov'd sufficiently by Dr. ^g *Lightfoot*, that neither the *Samaritans*, nor the *Sadducees*, rejected the Books of the Old Testament, though they did not admit the rest into the same Veneration and Authority with the Books of *Moses*, nor read them in their Synagogues. This is also prov'd by F. *Simon* ^h both of the *Sadducees* and

^f Antiq. Orient. Eccl. Epist. i.

^g Hebr. and Talmud. Exercit. on John iv. 25.

^h Crit. Hist. V. T. lib. i. c. 16. & 29. Disquisit. Crit. c. 12.

the *Karai*, and ⁱ *Morinus* likewise proves it of the *Karai*, who are generally taken for *Sadducees*: *F. Simon* maintains the contrary, and that they have wrong done them in being charg'd with the Opinions of the *Sadducees*: However, this is not material to our present purpose, since he shews that both the *Sadducees* and the *Karai*, or *Caraites*, and all the *Jews* besides receiv'd the entire Volume of the Scriptures without any contradiction. ^k *Hacksplan* likewise has shew'd that the *Sadducees* deny'd not the Authority of the Books of the Prophets. *Mardochaus*, a *Karaite*, in his Treatise lately publish'd, in Answer to several Questions proposed to him by *Triglandius*, alledges the Authority of the Prophets and *Hagiographa* promiscuously with that of the Books of *Moses*. And to the last Question, which is, † Whether the Holy Scriptures, that is, the *Pentateuch*, the Prophets, and the *Hagiographa* be the same in the Copies of the *Karaites*, that they are in those of the *Rabbanists*, without any alteration, or transposition, or difference in the *Keri* and *Ketib*: He answers, That as to the Code or Canon of Scripture, there is no dispute, no difference between them and the other *Jews*; that the order and

ⁱ Epist. 70. inter. Antiq. Eccl. Orient.

^k Præfat. de Lipmanno,

† Notitia Karæorum ex Mardochæi Karæi recentioris Tractatu haurienda. p. 10. Quando vero, Domine, interrogasti, num codex Scriptura, qui apud nos est, idem sit cum eo, quem habent Rabbanista: scias, velim, in hac parte, nullam esse inter nos dissensionem, discrimen nullum. Dispositio enim Scriptura debetur viris Synagoga magna scibus (viris) bonis, super quibus sit Pax; quo tempore inter eos nulla fuit controversia. Propterea apud nos (in codd. nostris) nihil est vel superflui vel deficientis. Nullum ὡς ἐγγὺς ἐγγὺς, nullum Keri vel Kethib, extra eam Scriptura dispositionem, qua adhuc apud Rabbanistas extat. Et correcti quidem illi codd. apud nos sunt præstantissimi, Lectionemque Ben Napthali sequimur, quemadmodum ex Disciplina Doctorum nostrorum per singulas generationes accepimus, p. 156.

disposition of the Books of Scripture is to be ascribed to the *Great Synagogue*, before there was any controversy or distinction of *Karaites*, and *Rabbanists*; that there are no transpositions, nor any other *Keri* or *Ketib*, but what other *Jews* have, and that they follow the Readings of *Ben Napthali*, as they have ever done.

III. Concerning the Books, whereof we find mention made in the *Old Testament*, either 1. They are not different from those, which are now in the Canon, but the same Books under divers Names. Or 2. They were not written by Inspiration, tho' written by Prophets. For we are not to suppose, that the Prophets were inspired in every thing that they wrote, any more than in all they spoke. We read of the story of the Prophet *Iddo*, and the story of the Book of the Kings, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 22. xxiv. 27. that is, the Commentary, (as in the Margin) the *Midrash*, *Inquisitorium*, *Reperitorium*. And the Book of *Jasher*, or of the Upright, seems to have been a Commentary or Chronicle, which was continued down from Age to Age, at least from *Joshua's* time to *David's*. This shews the Care and Integrity of the *Jews* in compiling their Canon, that they would not take into it all the Writings even of the Prophets themselves, but only such as they knew to be written by them, as Prophets, that is, by Inspiration, the Prophets themselves, no doubt, making a Distinction (as we find *St. Paul* did) between what they had written by the Spirit of God, and that in which they had not his immediate and extraordinary Direction, and infallible Assistance. Or 3. They might not be written by Prophets. For the Office of *Recorder*, or Remembrancer, or Writers of Chronicles (as it is explain'd in the Margin) is mention'd as an Office of great Honour and Trust, and was distinct from that of the Prophets, 2 *Sam.* viii. 16. 2 *Kings* xviii. 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 8. *Isaiah* xxxvi. 3, 22. Besides the *Hebrews* call'd every small Writing a Book:

Thus

Thus the *Book of the Generations of Adam* is the Genealogy of the Patriarchs, *Gen. v. 1.* and the *Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ*, *Matt. i. 1.* is his Genealogy. The same Word is translated a *Register of the Genealogy*. *Nehem. vii. 5.* and that which we render a Bill of Divorcement, *Deut. xxiv. 1.* is in the Original a Book of Divorcement, the Word being the same, which, *Josh. x. 13.* and *2 Sam. i. 18.* is translated the Book of *Jasher*. So *Matt. xix. 7.* and *Mark x. 4.* it is in the Greek a Book of Divorcement, the Word is the same which the *Septuagint* had used; it indeed may signify a little Book, but it often signifies a Book, without that distinction, and so it is render'd, *2 Tim. iv. 13.* *David's Letter to Joab* is a Book in the Hebrew and in the Greek, *2 Sam. xi. 14, 15.* So is the King of Syria's Letter to the King of Israel, *2 Kings v. 5.* and there are many the like instances; and Letters are styled Books by ¹ *Herodotus* and other Authors. Or 4. tho' it should be granted that some Books, which were written by Inspiration, are now lost, it is no Absurdity to suppose that God should suffer Writings to be lost, through the Fault and Negligence of Men, which were dictated by his Spirit. Several things might by the Prophets be deliver'd by Revelation to the Persons whom they concern'd, which were never committed to writing; and others, which were written, but which were not necessary to the ends of Revelation in general, but rather concern'd particular times and places, and the Substance whereof, as far as the World in general is concern'd, is to be found in the other Scriptures, might by the Carelessness of Men never come to the Sight and Knowledge of Posterity.

And here I shall observe, that the Books of Prophecy have always the Names of the Authors express'd,

¹ Herod. lib. i. c. 124. & lib. vi. c. 4. Demosth. Epist. 2. Pausan. in Messen. Dion. Cass. l. 43.

and commonly they are often repeated in the Books themselves, but in the Historical Books there was not the same reason for it; because in matters of Fact, which are past, an Author may easily be disprov'd, if he relates what is false of his own times, or of times whereof there are Memorials still extant. But the Credit of Prophecies concerning things to come to pass a long time after, must depend upon the Mission and Authority of the Prophet only, and therefore it was necessary that the Names of the Prophets should be annex'd, that their Predictions might be depended upon, when they were known to be deliver'd by Men, who by other Predictions already fulfill'd, had prov'd themselves to be true Prophets.

IV. The very Preservation of Books of so great Antiquity, through so many Changes and Revolutions, against all the Injuries of Time and Ignorance, against the Violence of War, and the Malice of Adversaries, and so many other Accidents, which have destroy'd most other Books of any considerable Antiquity, is a certain Indication of a wonderful Providence concern'd for them, and of that Evidence whereby they were at first attested. The Laws of the wisest Law-givers of the most flourishing and powerful Nations, have been so little regarded by the People to whom they were given, that they soon forsook the Practice of them, and readily deliver'd up themselves to be govern'd by other Laws, upon any Revolution; and all the Pretences to Revelation, which most of the Ancient Law-givers assum'd to themselves, could make them no longer adher'd to, nor so much valu'd, as to outlive the Fate of the particular Kingdoms and States for which they were contriv'd: but most of them were changed or laid aside before, and the rest given up and abandon'd, as out of date, and of little use or esteem afterwards, and all of them were so little able to withstand the Destruction of time, that we know not much more of them, than that the best and most

most ancient were in great measure taken out of the Laws of *Moses*. But the Books of *Moses* and the Prophets have continued entire and unchang'd under all Accidents and Revolutions of Affairs, bearing this Character, as well as others, of him who is immutable. They have been still asserted against all the Malice and Opposition of Enemies by a captiv'd and dispers'd People, who by the signal Providence of God, though they reject their *Messias*, yet still acknowledge those Prophecies, which foretold his Coming; and after their Dispersion for so many hundred Years, are so far from renouncing them, that they assert and maintain them, and are zealous even to Superstition, for those Books, which command that Worship, and appoint those Solemnities, which they have so long been out of all possibility to observe; as if those Laws, which were once so uneasy to their Fore-fathers, were now become natural to their Posterity, or rather because they were reveal'd by him, whose Word shall never pass away till all be fulfill'd.

V. The New Testament gives Evidence and Confirmation to the Books of the Old, which are so often cited in it.

VI. The Christians were religiously cautious and circumspect in admitting Books into the Canon of the New Testament. The ^m Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and the Second Epistle of *St. Peter*, were at first scrupled only, or chiefly, upon the account of the Style; the Style of the former being thought different from that of *St. Paul*, and the Style of the latter from that of *St. Peter*. The Epistle of *St. Jude* was likewise doubted of for this reason, because the Apocryphal Book of *Enoch* is cited in it. Writings, which went under the Names of several of the Apostles, were rejected, and by general Consent laid aside. The genuine Epistle of *St. Barnabas*, who is styled an Apostle, *Acts*

^m Hieron. Catal. Eccl. Script.

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xiii. 2. xiv. 14. was never receiv'd but as Apocryphal; and the First Epistle of St. Clement, of whom St. Paul gives as high a Character, *Phil. iv. 3.* as he doth of St. Luke, or as St. Peter ever gave of St. Mark, was never admitted among the Canonical Books, tho' it was wont to be read in Churches. But the Gospel according to St. Mark, and the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles written by St. Luke, have ever been receiv'd for Canonical. For which no Reason can be given, but that St. Mark and St. Luke were known to have written by Inspiration; or, which amounts to the same thing, from the Information of St. Peter and St. Paul, who were inspired, and afterwards saw their Books, and approv'd of them. Upon all personal and humane accounts, an Epistle of St. Barnabas or St. Clement, must have carry'd as much Authority with it, as any thing under the Name of St. Mark, or St. Luke. If either in the Epistle of St. Barnabas, or St. Clement, it be supposed that the Reasoning is not always just, but is sometimes too allegorical, and sometimes founded upon Mistakes in Natural Philosophy; yet it is certainly agreeable to the ways of Reasoning, and the Philosophy of that Age, so that nothing of this kind could then be any Hindrance or Prejudice to the Reception of these Epistles. * Irenæus styles uninspired Books, ἀνέγραφα, *unscriptural*, to distinguish them from the *νεγρά*, *Scriptures*.ⁿ St. Jerom says, that St. Barnabas was the Author of one Epistle written for the Edification of the Church, which is read among the Apocryphal Books; so that Books were styled *Apocryphal*, not because it was uncertain who

* Lib. i. c. i. §. 15. & c. 17.

ⁿ Unam ad ædificationem Ecclesiæ pertinentem Epistolam composuit, quæ inter Apocryphas scripturas legitur. Id. ib. Vitulum, qui pro nobis immolatus est, multa Scripturarum loca, & præcipue Barnabæ Epistola, quæ habetur inter Scripturas Apocryphas, nominat. Id. in Ezek. xliii. In libro etiam de Nominib. Hebraic. N. T. Libris Barnabæ Epistolam adjicit.

were the Authors of them, but because it was doubtful whether they were written by Inspiration or no. So careful was the Primitive Church to receive none into the Canon, but Books certainly inspired.

It is well observed by ° F. Simon, to this purpose, *That if we compare the Gospels and the other Books of the New Testament with the Liturgies that we have under the Names of several Apostles, to whom the most part of the Eastern Christians do attribute them, we shall be convinced that the Gospels are truly the Apostles. For all the Churches have preserved them in their Ancient Purity; whereas every particular Nation hath added to their Liturgies, and hath taken the liberty often to revise them. The respect that hath been always had to the Writings of the New Testament, without inserting any considerable additions therein, is an evident proof that all people have looked upon them as Divine Books, which it is not lawful for any to alter. On the contrary, they have been persuaded, that the Liturgies, tho' they bear the Names of the Apostles, or of some Disciples of Jesus Christ, were not originally written by them, to whom they were attributed. And therefore it hath been left free to the Churches to add to them, or to diminish from them, according as occasion requires.*

VII. As the Primitive Christians were very jealous and cautious in admitting Books into the Canon, so they had sufficient means and opportunities to examine and distinguish the genuine and inspired Writings from the Apocryphal or spurious St. Paul's Epistles, as soon as they were written, were published and read which the other Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. *Coloss. iv. 16. 2 Pet. iii. 16.* The way of Writing, and the Hands of the Apostles, were well known to those to whom they wrote, as St. Paul intimates of his own hand and manner of Salutation: for when he used an *Amanuensis*, yet he wrote the Sa-

° Crit. Hist. of the N. Test. Part i. c. 1.

lutation with his own Hand, as his token in every Epistle, 2 Thess. iii. 17. They generally wrote to whole Churches, but particular Men are frequently named in their Epistles, which was a great means to ascertain the Authority of them. ^P *Tertullian* appeals to Authentick Books, or the very Hand-writings of the Apostles themselves. For tho' it be acknowledged, that the word ^q *Authenticus* doth not always denote the Original Writing under the Author's own Hand, but sometimes only the Original Language; yet the words of *Tertullian* are exprefs, that the Original Epistles were in his time still extant: for which Reason, he refers the Hereticks to the Apostolical Churches; where they were read, viz. to the Church of Corinth, of *Phillippi*, *Thessalonica*, *Ephesus*, and *Rome*; but the Epistles of the Apostles were read in *Greek*, without doubt, in other Churches besides these; and the reason why he refers them to the Apostolical Churches rather than to any other, must be, because the Originals under *St. Paul's* own Hand were there still to be seen; and he mentions, that the Thrones or Seats of the Apostles were then also preserv'd, as ^r *Eusebius* says, that of *St. James* was preserved to his time, When ^t *Alypius*, in the Council of *Carthage*, A. D. CCCCXIX, moved, that the * *Authentick* Canons of the Council of *Nice*, which were said to be kept at *Constantinople*, might be consulted; he certainly meant the Canons, as they had been subscribed by the Bishops in that Council: for he proposed, that Examination

^P Age jam, qui vales curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuae, percurre Ecclesias Apostolicas, apud quas ipsa adhuc Cathedra Apostolorum suis locis praesidentur, apud quas ipsa Authentica Litera eorum recitantur. *Tertull. de Praescript. c. 36.*

^q Authentick is opposed to copy, τὰ τέτων ἴσα, ἥτοι ῥέσις, καὶ ἀνθεντικά εἰς μέσον ἀγαγέτω Γεώργιος, &c. C. T. vi. Col. 963. Act. 14.

^r *Euseb. Hist. lib. vii. c. 19.*

^t *Cod. Canon. Eccl. Affric. p. 331. Justell. Edit. Fol.*

* Τὰ ἀνθεντικά, τέλει τὰ πρωτότυπα ἃ ἐν Νικαίᾳ Συνοδῷ. *Mar. Ephes. in Conc. Flor. Sess. 20. Col. 285.*

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^t *Euse*
c. 11.
ἀγαγεῖο
lib. iii. p.

might be made, whether their own *Greek* Copies, or those pretended by the Church of *Rome*, agreed with that Original. And was the distance of Time so much less between the Council of *Nice*, and that Council of *Carthage*, than it was between the Writing of *St. Paul's* Epistles, and *Tertullian's* Appeal to them? or, was there less care taken in preserving his Epistles, than in preserving the Canons of the Council of *Nice*, that *Tertullian* could not mean the same, that *Alypius* did by the word *Authentick*? It is said, that *Pantenus*^r, contemporary with *Tertullian*, found the Gospel of *St. Matthew* in the *Hebrew* Tongue among some *Christians* in *India*, that had been left there by *St. Bartholomew*, which therefore was of equal Authority with an Original.

St. Barnabas cites the Gospel of *St. Matthew*.^v *Justin Martyr* ascribes the Gospels to the Apostles; he transcribes the Christian Doctrine at large out of them, and declares that they were read in the Christian Assemblies every *Sunday*.^x *St. Irenæus*, a Disciple of *St. Polycarp*, who was made Bishop by *St. John*, gives a particular account of the Writings of the Four Evangelists, and says, there were Four Gospels and no more, and that these were written by *St. Matthew*, and *St. Mark*, and *St. Luke*, and *St. John*:^y He likewise transcribes the most material Passages of the *Acts of the Apostles* at large.^z *Clemens Alexandrinus* distinguishes the four Gospels from others which had assumed that Title.^a *Tertullian* undertook the Defence of the Four Gospels against *Marcion*. And these Fathers frequently quote these and the other Writings of the Apostles; so do likewise *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius* and *Polycarp*, who lived and conversed with the Apostles themselves. But in our Disputes with Infidels, particular regard is to be had to the History

^r Euseb. Hist. lib. v. c. 10. ^v Apol. 2. ^x Iren. lib. iii. c. 11. ^y Ib. c. 12. ^z Ἐν τοῖς παραδεδομένοις ἡμῖν τέταρσιν εὐαγγελίοις οὐκ ἔχ· μὲν τὸ ῥηθὲν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ κατ' Αἰγυπτίους. Stromat. lib. iii, p. 465. ^a Tertull. adv. Marcion. lib. iv. c. 2, 5.

of the Gospel ; for our Proof against them depends upon Matter of Fact. Both ^b *Grotius* and *F. Simon* have proved, that the Gospel written in *Hebrew* by *St. Matthew*, was preserved to the time of *St. Jerom* and *Epiphanius* ; and that tho' the *Nazarens* had made some Additions to it, yet they had made no Alterations in the Original Text. *F. Simon* moreover says, that the Gospel of *St. Matthew* had been translated undoubtedly out of *Hebrew* into *Greek*, before the *Nazarens* had inserted their Additions ; these being to be found in no *Greek* Copy. The *Ebionites* had corrupted the *Hebrew* Copy, which they used, and had left out what they pleased ; but the Copy of the *Nazarens*, ^c *Epiphanius* says, was most entire, only he is not certain whether they retained the Genealogy of Christ ; but it is most probable in *F. Simon's* judgment, that they did retain it, tho' the *Ebionites* omitted it. So that tho' there were some Additions made by the *Nazarens*, yet as far as the proof of our Religion against Infidels is concerned, the Gospel, in its Original *Hebrew*, as it was written by *St. Matthew*, remained exactly perfect for divers Ages. 'Till the Sect of the *Nazarens* ceasing, and the *Hebrew* Tongue growing out of use, the *Greek* Translation only was preserved. This Translation of *St. Matthew's* Gospel is ascribed to one of the Apostles or Evangelists, tho' it be not certain to whom of them it belongs. ^d *Papias* speaks of the Times before there was any Authentick Version, when he says, that every one translated it, as he could, for his own use. It appears from him however, that there were *Greek* Versions of the Gospel of *St. Matthew* made immediately upon its first publication, and from hence

^b *Grot. in Mat. F. Sim. Crit. Hist. on the N. Test. c. 7, 8.*

^c Ἐχουσι δὲ τὸ κτ' Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον πληρὲς αὐτὸν Ἑβραϊστί. παρ' αὐτοῖς γὰρ σαφῶς τὴν καθὼς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐλάφθη Ἑβραϊκοῖς γραμματικῶν ἐτι σώζεσθαι ἐκ οἷδα δὲ εἰ καὶ τὰς ἰουδαϊστικὰς τὰς ἀπὸ τ' Ἀβραάμ ἄχρη χειρὶς ὡς αὐτὸν. *Epiphanius. Hæres. 29. Num. 9.*

^d *Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 39.*

we may be assured, that St. *John* revised and approved the present Version (which is by some attributed to him) by whomsoever it was made at first. For this Gospel in the *Greek* Tongue being most in use, and thereby preserved, when the Original *Hebrew* has been so long ago lost, it is not to be supposed that St. *John* should have no regard to it in that Review which he took of the other Gospels, that were written originally in *Greek*. We read in ^d *Photius*, that he revised the Gospels which were brought to him written in divers Languages, the Versions as well as the Originals, and therefore this of St. *Matthew's* Gospel cannot be supposed to have been omitted. * *Epiphanius* saying that St. *Matthew* wrote his Gospel in *Hebrew*, adds, that some converted *Jews* assured him, that both St. *John's* Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in the *Hebrew* Tongue, were then in possession of the *Jews* of *Tiberias*; and that by reading them, they themselves became Converts.

One of the Miraculous Gifts was that of *Discerning of Spirits*, whereby Persons endued with it were enabled to distinguish true Revelations from Impostures, 1 Cor. xii. 10. And St. *John* wrote his Gospel and his Epistles to confute those Hereticks, who were the chief Forgers of counterfeit Books of Scripture, or the most notorious corrupters of the true Books: and his Life was, by the Providence of God, prolonged, that he might be able both to vindicate and perfect the Canon of Scripture. We find that ^c he discovered an Imposture, which was framed concerning St. *Paul*, and ^f that he read and approved the Gospels which

^d Phot. Cod. ccliv.

* Hær. 30. n. 3.

^e Hier. Catal. in. St. Luc.

^f τῶν περὶ ἀναγραφέντων τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων εἰς πάντας ἤδη, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν διαδεδομένων, ἀπαδέξατο καὶ φανερὴν ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυροῦντα. Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 24.—quod quum legisset Matthæi, Marci, & Luca volumina, probaverit quidem Textum Historiæ, & vera eos dixisse firmaverit. Hieron. Catal. in St. Joan.

had been written before his own; and there is no reason to doubt, but he had seen all the other Writings of the New Testament, and so finished the Canon of Scripture himself. And the Scriptures of the New Testament were read in the Churches and Assemblies of Christians from the beginning, as those of the Old Testament had been in the Synagogues of the Jews, by which means they became so divulged and published, that they could be neither lost nor falsified.

VIII. The Books of the New Testament were acknowledged to be genuine by the Adversaries of the Christian Religion. To say nothing of St. Paul's Epistles, which he frequently quotes, the Gospels were allowed by ^g *Julian* the Apostate to belong to the Authors, whose Names they bear. ^h *Trypho* owns he had read the Gospels, and makes no question or scruple about the Authors. *Celsus* quotes the Scriptures frequently, and *Hierocles* (as ⁱ *Lactantius*, who had heard him discourse, says) was as conversant in them, as if he had once been a Christian; yet neither of them moved any dispute concerning the Authors of the Books of the Scriptures; but in referring to them upon all occasions, shewed that they had nothing to object on that Head. And when ^k *Celsus* says, that some of the Christians made alterations in the Gospels, this is a confession that some only did it; and *Origen* shews, that they were Hereticks, viz. the *Marcionists* and *Valentinians*, and perhaps the Disciples of *Lucanus* or *Lucianus*, for in this he could not be positive, tho' this *Lucanus* was a follower of *Marcion*. But when *Celsus* made that Objection, he would certainly have alledged, that they were ascribed to wrong Authors, if he could have found any colour for such a pretence.

^g Cyril. Alex. contr. Jul. lib. x.

ⁱ Lactant. Institut. lib. v. c. 2, 3,

^h Just. Mart. Dial.

^k Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 2.

IX. There are still extant Copies of great Antiquity. The *Cambridge Copy* in *Greek* and *Latin*, containing the Four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles; and that which is supposed to be the second part of it, containing *St. Paul's Epistles*, in the *French King's Library*; and another the like Copy, which is in the Library of the *Benedictines* of ¹*St. Germain's*, are concluded to be a thousand Years old at least: *Morinus* thought them to be ancients than *St. Jerom's* time. The *Alexandrian Copy* is believed to have been written by *Thecla*, above one thousand three hundred Years ago. ^m *Morinus* acknowledgeth it to be of above twelve hundred Years date. ⁿ *Bishop Walton* supposes the *Alexandrian MS.* to be at least as old as that in the *Vatican*, which is allowed to be twelve hundred Years old. There is ^o one *Syriack MS.* of the Gospels in the Library of the Duke of *Florence*, of above a thousand Years Antiquity, and another not much less ancient. A ^p *Gothick Translation* of the Four Evangelists formerly belonging to the Abbey of *Werden*, is likewise of above a thousand Years Antiquity. To omit the ancient *Latin MS.* both in ^q our own, and in other Countries, ^r *Mafius* had a *Syriack MS.* of the Bible written above a thousand Years before; and ^s *Morinus* mentions a *Coptick MS.* of the Four Evangelists, in the Library of the Oratorians at *Paris*, that has no distinction of Verses or Words, which is a certain sign of great Antiquity. And what ancient Books are

¹ F. Simon. *Crit. Hist. of the N. Test.* Part 1. c. 31. Mabil. de Re Diplom. lib. v. Tabell. 1.

^m Epist. 54. inter Antiq. Eccl. Orient. ⁿ Prolegom. ix. 34.

^o F. Simon *Crit. Hist. of the N. Test.* Part 2. c. 14.

^p Gruter. Inscrip. p. 146.

^q Vid. Mabil. Iter. Italic. & Uffer. de Symb.

^r Maf. Præf. in Josua.

^s Morin. Exercit. Bibl. lib. i. Exercit. 6. c. 22.

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there, of which the Originals are still extant ? or of which there are so ancient Copies, as of the Scriptures?

X. Sufficient Reasons may be given, to shew how it came to pass, that the Authority of some Books was at first doubted of.

1. The Epistle to the *Hebrews* had no Name prefix'd, (either because the † *Jews* were prejudiced against St. *Paul*, or because the *Gentiles* were his more peculiar care, or for some other reason unknown) and in this it differs from the rest of St. *Paul's* Epistles, and the † Style is different, which occasioned the first doubts about it (as it happen'd likewise to St. *Peter's* second Epistle, upon the account of its Style) and then the *Novatians* alledging some Texts in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in favour of their Opinion, this made the Orthodox the less inclined to receive a Book, which before had been disputed; and therefore, tho' it was received in the East, as St. *Paul's*, it was questioned at Rome, ^u where *Novatian* began his Schism; whereas it had been received at first by the Church of Rome: for ^x *Clemens Romanus*, in his First Epistle written in the Name of that Church to the Church of *Corinth*, makes great use of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and sometimes cites its very words; from whence *Eusebius* concludes, that St. *Paul* was the Author of it. The Second Epistle of St. *Peter* might be scrupled on the same account, and both that and the *Revelation* of St. *John* being alledged for the *Millennium*, by such as understood it in a gross Sense; this caused the Authority of those Books to be called in question, which is said ^y expressly of the *Revelation*.

† Aug. Exposit. Epist. ad Rom. inchoat.
Petr. & Paul.

^u Hieron. in Esai. c. vi, & viii

Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

^y Ibid. lib. vi. c. 25.

^t Hieron. Catal.

^x Euseb.

2. Some Epistles were written to particular Persons, or directed to such as lived at a great distance; and by reason of Persecutions arising, the Authentick Epistles might not readily be produced. The Epistle of St. *Paul* to *Philemon*, and the Second and Third Epistles of St. *John*, being short, and written upon particular Occasions, contain little, which was needful to be cited in the Controversies of the First Ages, and they were therefore the seldomer cited. Besides, these Two Epistles of St. *John* and his *Revelation*, with the Epistle of St. *Jude*, and the Second Epistle of St. *Peter*, were omitted in the ancient *Syriack* Version, which probably was made before these Books of Scripture were publish'd. It is acknowledg'd to be the eldest of any Version, and written very near the times of the Apostles, at least, if not during the lives of some of them. And the Authority of that Version might occasion the Caution afterwards us'd in the reception of them. But all the Books omitted in the first *Syriac* Version, are cited by *Ephraim* of *Syrus* in the fourth Century, excepting the second Epistle of St. *John*; the words of which he had no occasion to alledge; at least in that part of his Works, which has been published in Greek. St. *John's* Gospel was indeed last written: but this was to supply what had been omitted by the other Evangelists, and ² contain'd what he had preach'd for many years, not only at *Ephesus*, but in the neighbouring Provinces of *Asia*, which upon occasion, he was wont to visit; and therefore his Gospel was immediately dispers'd and known all over the World, and by the Churches of *Syria*, as well as by others, who before had been acquainted with the Substance of it: But there were not the same Reasons for so speedy a Publication of his *Revelation*, or of his Second and Third Epistles, and those of St. *Peter* and St. *Jude*.

² Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 23, 24.

3. Some Books were not usually read in the Churches, as the rest were. All the Books of Scripture, except the *Revelation* of St. John, are inserted in the Catalogue of the Council of *Laodicea*; and this was omitted, because by reason of the abstruse Mysteries contain'd in it, it was not publicly read in Churches: for that Catalogue was design'd to shew what Books ought to be read in the publick Assemblies.

4. The Hereticks would use all their Endeavours and Subtilty to hinder the Reception of those Books, by which their Heresies were disprov'd, and they might so far have effect, as to make some to doubt for a while of their Authority. For instance, *Diotrephes*, an ambitious aspiring Man, who prated *against St. John with malicious words*, and had so much power, as to cast the Brethren out of the Church, would forbid the receiving of St. John's Epistles, as well as the receiving the Brethren of that Apostles Communion; and that he did this, St. John himself intimates, when he says, *I wrote unto the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not*, Joh. Epist. iii. 9. that is, he receiv'd not St. John's Epistle, for that would have been to receive him as an Apostle, or to acknowledge his Authority. ^a *Cerintus* seems to have feign'd a Book of *Revelations* in imitation of St. John, or rather in opposition to him, thereby to hinder, as far as he was able, the benefit, which the Church was to receive from St. John's *Revelation*, who solemnly declar'd *Cerintus* to be the Enemy of Truth, and *Caius* the Roman Presbyter, upon the account of his Book of *Revelations*, styled him the Enemy of the Scriptures.

XI. Nevertheless, there is no Book of the New Testament, which by these, or any other means, hath

^a Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 28. Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 3.

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been call'd in question, but it has sufficient Testimony from Antiquity. The Epistle of *St. Paul* to the *Hebrews*, and that of *St. James*, were in the Ancient *Syriack* Version; which proves that those Churches ever receiv'd them. The Epistle to the *Hebrews*, as I have already observ'd, is cited by *Clemens Romanus* in his first Epistle, which was it self of such Authority, that it was wont to be read in Churches: from whence ^b *Eusebius* had great reason to ascribe it to *St. Paul*. And this Epistle of *Clemens* was written by him, to the Church of *Corinth*, in the Name of the Church of *Rome*; which shews that both the Church of *Rome*, and the Church of *Corinth*, at that time receiv'd the Epistle to the *Hebrews* as Canonical, tho' afterwards some, says ^c *Eusebius*, rejected this Epistle, alledging that it was by the *Roman* Church deny'd to be *St. Paul's*. But it is ascrib'd to *St. Paul* by the Orthodox Bishops of the ^d first Council of *Antioch*, in their Epistle to *Paulus Samosatenus*; by ^e *Clemens Alexandrinus*, by ^f *Origen*, who ^g says, that the Ancients, before him, did not without good Grounds, acknowledge it to be that *Apostle's*; by the whole Church of *Alexandria*; for *Alexander*, Bishop of that See, in his ^h two Epistles against *Arius*, alledges the Authority of *St. Paul* in this to the *Hebrews*; and the latter of his Epistles was ⁱ subscrib'd by his Clergy. And the Words of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* were, by the Fathers of the Council of *Nice*, produc'd against the *Arian* Heresy, according to the History of it by *Gelasius Cyzicenus*.

^b Hist. l. iii. c. 38.

^c Lib. iii. c. 2.

^d Concil. Labb. Tom. i. col. 844.

^e Strom. 2, 4, 6.

^f In Joan. Tom. 2.

^g Apud Euseb. l. vi. c. 25.

^h Socrat. l. i. c. 6. Theodoret. l. i. c. 5.

ⁱ Gelas. Cyzic. Hist. Conc. Nicen. l. ii. c. 3. & 23.

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^k *Justin Martyr* observes, in his first Apology, that Christ is called an Apostle, from whence the learned *Dr. Grabe* concluded, that *Justin* acknowledged the Divine Authority of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: because he is styled Apostle no where but *Heb. iii. 1*. It is frequently cited by *Irenæus*, and produc'd as Canonical Scripture in Confutation of Hereticks. ^l *St. Jerom* declares, that he receiv'd the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, upon the Authority of the Primitive Writers, who cited it as Canonical. ^m *Theodoret* says, that the Church ever receiv'd it, and that *Eusebius*, with all the Ancients, from the beginning acknowledged it to be *St. Paul's*. The ⁿ *Habessins*, who were converted to Christianity in the Reign of *Constantine* the Great, commonly have the Epistles of *St. Paul* in one Tome by themselves, and that to the *Hebrews* among the rest. The Epistle of *St. James* is cited by *Clemens Romanus* in both his Epistles, as is also the Second Epistle of *St. Peter*; not *verbatim* indeed, but in such a manner, as the Old Testament is cited in the New, and according to the Custom of Ancient Writers. In his second Epistle, they are cited under the Title of a Prophecy, because both these Apostles foretel what would befall those, who did not live as he there exhorts to do. The Epistle of *St. James* is often alledged by *Irenæus* as of Canonical Authority, against the Doctrines advanced by Hereticks. It is by ^o *Origen* ascribed to *St. James*. The Epistle of *St. Jude* is ascribed to him by ^p *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who likewise says, that he had prophetically spoke of the Heresies that sprung up. The same ancient and learned Author wrote ^q *Adum-*

^k Κὶ ἄγγελος ὃ καλεῖται καὶ Ἀπόστολος. Apol. ad Antonin. Pium, sub fin.

^l Ad Dardam.

^m Hypoth. in Epist. ad Hebr.

ⁿ Ludolf. Hist. Æthiop. 1. 3. c. 2. n. 14. c. 4. n. 28.

^o In Genes. Hom. 13. In Josu. Hom. 7. In Joh. Tom. 19.

^p Pædag. 1. iii. c. 8. Strom. 3.

^q Append. ad Orationem, *Quis dives salu.* Oxon. Edit.

brations, or a short Comment upon St. Jude's Epistle, still extant in the Translation of ^r Cassiodorus. ^f Origen acknowledged it to be St. Jude's; so did ^r Tertullian, who was so far from rejecting St. Jude's Epistle, that upon the Authority of it he argued, that the Prophecy of Enoch must be genuine. It is cited by Irenæus. ^u The second Epistle of St. John is ascribed to him by Irenæus and Tertullian; by ^w Clemens Alexandrinus in his *Adumbration* upon it, and by the Council of Carthage, An. 256. in which * St. Cyprian presided. Neither his second nor third Epistle was deny'd to be his, nor was any Objection made to them by ^x Dionysius of Alexandria. The Revelation of St. John was own'd to be genuine by ^y Justin Martyr, by ^z Irenæus and by ^a Tertullian, ^b Clemens Alexandrinus, ^c Hippolytus, and ^d Origen, and it is frequently cited by St. Cyprian. Both ^e Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, and Hippolytus, wrote Commentaries upon the Revelation of St. John. ^f Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, did not deny the Divine Authority of it, though from the Unlikeness of Style, and other Differences, which he observ'd between the Revelation and his Gospel and Epistles, he believ'd another of that Name, and not St. John the Evangelist, to be the Author of it. St. Cyprian has very large Citations out of the Revelation of St. John throughout his Works upon all Occasions, and parti-

^r Cassiod. Divin. Lect. c. 8. It is said, he commented upon St. James's Epistle, but the *Adumbration* extant is upon St. Jude's, and it shou'd be Judæ instead of Jacobi in Cassiod. unless he wrote upon both. ^f Orig. in Gen. Hom. 13. & in Jos. Hom. 7.

^t De cultu Fœm. l. i. c. 3.

^u Iren. l. i. c. 13. §. 2. Tertull. Præscr. c. 33.

^w Ibid. * Cypr. op. Oxon. p. 242.

^x Apud Euseb. l. vii. c. 25. ^y Dialog.

^z Lib. iv. c. 37. l. v. c. 26.

^a Præscript. c. 33. de Resurrect. Carnis. c. 27. adv. Prax. c. 17.

adv. Marc. l. iii. c. 14. ^b Strom. 6.

^c Statuæ marmor. Inscript. Arethas. in Apocalyp. Proœm. Hieron. Catal. ^d In Matt. Tom. 16.

^e Hier. Catal. in Johan. ^f Euseb. ib.

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cularly in his^g Collections of Texts of *Holy Scripture* to convince the *Jews*, and instruct Christians in the Doctrine and Duties of their Religion. It was esteemed canonical and genuine by^h *Theophilus Antiochenus*, by *Melito*, who also wrote a Commentary on it; and by *Apollonius*.ⁱ *St. Jerom* declares of the *Revelation* of *St. John*, as he does of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that he receiv'd it upon the Authority of the Ancients.

^k *St. Athanasius* (for there is but little reason to doubt his being the Author of the *Synopsis Sacra Scriptura*, which is ascribed to him in the Copies of his Works) reckons the *Revelations* among the canonical Books, as well as all the rest now received, and says it was ascribed to *St. John* the Divine by holy Men of old, who were endued with the Spirit of God, and received and approved of by them, as written by him. And afterwards says, it was written by *John* the Evangelist and Divine, in the Isle of *Patmos*. The^l Council of *Laodicea*, *A. D.* CCCLXIV. omits no Book of the New Testament, but the *Revelation*, which is not inserted in the Catalogue of that Council, for the reason above-mention'd. The Council of^m *Carthage*, held *A. D.* CCCCXIX. sets down the complete Canon of Scripture, ascribing (as the Council of *Laodicea* had done) fourteen Epistles to *St. Paul*, two to *St. Peter*, three to *St. John*, one to *St. James*, one to *St. Jude*, and ascribing, besides, the *Revelation* to *St. John* the Apostle. And both these Councils wereⁿ receiv'd into the Code of the Eastern Church. The former being also in the Code of the Church Universal. The second Epistle of *St. Peter* is alleged by *Irenæus* as of Authority to confirm the Apostolical Doctrine, and is ascribed to *St. Peter*

^g Testimon. adv. Judæos, &c.

^h Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 24, 26. l. 5. c. 18.

ⁱ Epist. ad Dardan.

^l Can. 59.

^m Can. 24.

^k S. Athans. op. Vol. ii. p. 61. 152.

ⁿ Synod. Quinisext. can. 2.

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by ° *Origen*, and by *Firmilianus* ^P in his Epistle to St. *Cyprian*.

XII. Though the Authority of some Books hath been question'd by private Men, yet those Books were never rejected by any Council of the Church, though frequent Councils were call'd in the first Ages of Christianity, and had this very thing under Consideration. * *Tertullian*, after he had turn'd *Montanist*, rejecting the Authority of *Hermas's Pastor*, as not being receiv'd into the Canon of Scripture, says, that it was reckon'd amongst the Apocryphal Books, by all the Councils of his Adversaries, the Orthodox. From whence it is evident, that in *Tertullian's* time, divers Councils had pass'd their Censure upon the Apocryphal Books, and that the Canon of Scripture had been fixt long before. So that the time; in which some of these Councils were held, must probably be, whilst St. *Polycarp*, a Disciple of St. *John*, was yet living, whose Martyrdom, by the earliest Computation, was not till A. D. CXLVII. at least they must be held in *Irenæus's* Life-time, who convers'd with St. *Polycarp*, and liv'd at the same time with *Tertullian*, and † makes express Distinction between Genuine and Apocryphal Books. Thus was the Canon of Scripture vouch'd by those, who had receiv'd it from St. *John*, and Councils upon occasion were call'd (which † *Tertullian* elsewhere mentions as very numerous and fre-

° Orig. in Jos. Hom. 7.

^P Firmilian. apud Cyprian. Ep. 75.

* — Sed cederem tibi, si Scriptura Pastoris, qua sola mœchos amat, divino instrumento meruisset incidi; si non ab omni Concilio Ecclesiarum etiam vestrarum inter Apocrypha falsa judicaretur. Tertull. de Pudicit. c. 10.

† Iren. l. i. c. i. §. 15. Ib. c. 17.

† Aguntur præcepta per Gracias illas certis in locis Concilia ex universis Ecclesiis, per que et altiora quæque in commune tractantur, et ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani magna veneratione celebratur. Et hoc quidem dignum fide auspicante congregari undique ad Christum. Tertull. de Jejun. c. 12.

quent in Greece) to give Testimony to the Genuine Canon, and censure Apocryphal Books.

It is manifest, that the Canon of Scripture was settled before the Council of *Laodicea*, which in the Fifty ninth Canon appoints that no Books, ^a which are *extra Canonem*, but only Canonical Books should be read in the Christian Assemblies, and then subjoins the Titles of the *Canonical* Books, that were to be read, which Denomination they had, as *Zonaras* and *Balsamon* observe, because they were inserted into the Apostles Canons, and all others were styl'd *Uncanonical*. It is concluded, after the strictest Examination, by the best Criticks, that those which go under the Name of the Apostles Canons, are the Canons of Councils assembled before the Council of *Nice*, inasmuch as they are refer'd to by that Council; and that they are styl'd *Apostolical*, because they were made by Apostolical Men, or such as liv'd next to the Apostles times, and deliver'd in these Canons what they had receiv'd from the Apostles. Bishop *Beverege* thinks they ^b were collected into one Body by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and Dr. *Cave* seems inclin'd to be of the same Judgment. As to the Authority of the particular Apostolical Canon, which contains the Canon of Scripture, the Council of *Laodicea* gives a sufficient Testimony to it, so far as it concerns the Books of the New Testament; and shews wherein it has been corrupted since. All which very well agrees with that which I observ'd from *Tertullian*, that frequent Councils were call'd in the first Ages, and that they had the Canon of Scripture among other things under consideration, which we find set down in the last of the Apostles Canons, and from thence, in the Canons of the Council

^a Οὐ δὲ ἰδιωτικὰς ψαλμοὺς λέγεσθαι, ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, εἰδὲ ἀκανόνιστα βιβλία, ἀλλὰ μόνον τὰ κανονικὰ καὶ παλαιὰ καὶ καινὴ διαθήκη.
Conc. Laod. Can. lix.

^b Bever. Annot. ad Pandect. Can. & Cod. Can. Eccl. Primit. vind. Cave. Histor. Liter. in Clem. Roman.

of *Laodicea*; no Book being omitted but the *Revelation* of *St. John*, which yet had been acknowledg'd and receiv'd as Authentick, from the beginning, by those who had most reason to know of what Authority it was; tho' none stand inserted into this Canon, but such Books as were appointed to be constantly read in the Assemblies of Christians.

It appears then, that the Canon of Scripture was finish'd by *St. John*, and that such Books as were not of Divine Authority were rejected, by Councils held, when they were living Witnesses to certify *St. John's* Approbation of the Canon, or at least those, who had receiv'd it from such Witnesses; the Gospels of the other Evangelists were translated into divers Languages in *St. John's* Life-time, and we must in reason suppose the same of the other Books of Scripture; this is certain, that they were all very early translated into many Tongues, and dispers'd into so many Hands, in so many Countries, that it was impossible they should be either lost or falsify'd, especially since the several Sects of Christians were never more jealous and watchful over each other in any thing, than in this Particular, the different Interests and Pretensions of all Parties being chiefly concern'd in it, and no Catalogue of Books could have been receiv'd exclusively to all others, but upon the clearest Evidence.

XIII. When it once appear'd, that the Books, which had been doubted of, belong'd to the Canon of Scripture, they were afterwards generally acknowledg'd, and constantly receiv'd in all Churches: Every Sect has since us'd all Arts and Endeavours to reconcile the Scriptures to their own Doctrines; few or none presuming to reject the Authority of any of these Books, which they would never scruple to do, if they suppos'd they could make out any plausible Pretence for it. Protestants have refus'd to admit of the Apocryphal Books, as inspir'd; but whoever have gone about to reject any part of the Canonical

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Scriptures, have been universally declar'd against for it: whereof no other Reason can be given, but the Evidence, that is for the Authority of the Canonical Books of Scripture, which is wanting for the Authority of the Apocryphal Books. Papists own the Authority of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and of the fourteenth Chapter of that Epistle, which is directly against praying in an unknown Tongue; and they acknowledge the Epistle to the *Galatians* to be genuine, tho' the second Chapter be so clearly against the Pretensions of the Church of *Rome*. These Epistles indeed were never controverted: but the Epistle to the *Hebrews* likewise is not rejected by the *Socinians*, tho' the Divine Nature of Christ, and the Merit and Satisfaction of his Sufferings, are so plainly asserted in it; and they dare not deny the Authority of the Gospel and Epistles of *St. John*, though they are so hard put to it, to expound them to their own Sense, that *Socinus* was forc'd to pretend to I know not what Revelation, to help out one of his Explications, which he would not have done, if he could have found out any colour for not admitting the Authority of a Text so directly contrary to his own Tenets, that he could not expect, that any thing less than a Revelation should procure any Credit to his Interpretation. And generally the Case is the same with other Sects: those that differ never so much one from another in the Interpretation of particular Texts, yet agree in the Acknowledgment of the Authority of the Canon of Scripture it self, or can find out no sufficient Pretence to disown it.

But because the Account I have here given of the Canon of Scripture, is thought new and liable to Exceptions; I shall, in Defense and Explication of it, prove these Four things, which will take in all, that is material, which has been objected against it.

I. That by the *Canon* of Scripture is to be understood, a set Number or Catalogue of Books of Scrip-

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ture. II. That there is sufficient Evidence to believe, that St. *John* did both perfect and settle the Canon of Scripture. III. That tho' the Councils mention'd by *Tertullian*, as having confirm'd and attested the Canon of Scripture, be omitted by other Authors, yet this is no Proof, that the Canon of Scripture was not confirm'd and attested by such Councils. IV. That tho' uncanonical Books were read in Churches, and the Authority of some Books, which had been received into the Canon, was afterwards disputed; this doth not prove, that these Books were not inserted by St. *John* into the Canon, which was confirmed and attested by those Councils as fix'd and established by him.

I. That by the *Canon* of Scripture, is to be understood a set Number or Catalogue of Books of Scripture. The word *Canon*, both in Ecclesiastical and Prophane Authors, signifies a Roll or Catalogue. Thus a ^c *Matricula*, or Register, and Roll of Names, was called *Canon*. *Καίων βασιλέων* is the Inscription of ^d *Ptolomy's* List of the Kings of the Four Monarchies, with the Years of their several Reigns annex'd. Such were the Chronological Canons which ^e *Plutarch* mentions; such were also the Chronological Canons of *Eusebius*, who likewise styles his Tables, containing the Parallel Places in the Gospels, *Evangelical Canons*; and speaking of the Books of Scripture, he ^f uses the Word *Canon* and Catalogue promiscuously. ^g *Tertullian* defines the genuine Books of Scripture to be those, which were worthy to be inserted into the Divine Code; and ^h *Origen* calls them the Ecclesiastical Ca-

^c Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. 17. Καθαρεθῆσε τὸ κλῆρος, καὶ ἄλλ-
τερον τὸ κανὼν ἐστίν. Conc. Nicen. Can. 17. vid. Albaspin. ad
Conc. Antioch. Can. 2.

^d Apud Petav. Ration. Temp. Par. 2.

^e Hist. l. iv. c. 26. l. vi. c. 25.

^f Hist. l. iv. c. 26. l. vi. c. 25.

^g Hist. l. vi. c. 25.

^e In vit. Solon.

^g Qui divino instrumen-

^h Apud Euseb.

non. This is evidently the true signification of the word *Canon*, as it is used in relation to the Scriptures, and I know of no ancient Author that has understood it otherwise. But the Books of Scripture are styled *Canonical*, sometimes as belonging to the Canon of Scripture, and at other times, because they were confirmed by the Apostolical Canons, or the Canons of Councils.

II. There is sufficient Evidence to believe, that St. *John* did both finish and settle the Canon of Scripture. There is no doubt to be made, but that St. *John*, in so long a Life, had seen the Writings of all the rest of the Apostles and Evangelists, and signified his Approbation of them to those with whom he conversed. For what could be more worthy of his care, or more necessary, than for him to ascertain the Authority of those Writings, that were to be the Rule of Faith and Practice, and the Preservative of the Church against Heresies, which were very numerous even in his time, and which he foresaw would give so much trouble and scandal in future Ages? And it is upon this occasion observable, that these Books, the Authority whereof has been called in question, were chiefly designed against the Heresies and Corruptions of false Brethren; which might be some hindrance at first to their Reception, thro' the subtilty and insinuation of Hereticks; but these Books, upon this very account, were the more proper to be recommended by St. *John*. Three of them likewise out of seven, were of his own Writing. It is evident beyond all contradiction, that St. *John* must have seen, at least, the Epistle of St. *Paul* to the Church of *Ephesus*, where he presided. And yet this is taken notice of by no ancient Writer, but is left to be collected by circumstances: *Eusebius* only informs us, that St. *John* revised the other Three Gospels, before he wrote his own; and this *Eusebius* mentions upon a particular occasion, thinking it concerned him to give some account how it came to pass, that

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that St. *John* added a Fourth Gospel to the Three written before : And yet this very thing is omitted by St. *Athanasius*, and by St. *Gregory Nazianzen*. And we learn from ¹ *Photius* a remarkable circumstance omitted by *Eusebius* and St. *Jerom*, viz. that the Versions of the Gospels were approved by St. *John*, as well as the Originals. So little are Negative Arguments in this case to be relied upon.

III. Tho' the Councils, mentioned by *Tertullian*, as having attested and confirmed the Canon of Scripture be omitted by other Authors, yet this is no proof that the Canon of Scripture was not attested and confirmed by such Councils: for it only shews, that a Negative is no sufficient proof in this case, as I shall fully make appear. *Eusebius* had occasion enough to take notice of these Councils, tho' they had never had the Canon of Scripture under debate; at least, where he writes of *Hermas's Pastor*, upon the account whereof, *Tertullian* speaks of these Councils, it might be expected, that he should have mentioned them. The Omission of *Eusebius*, I presume, will not be alledged as any prejudice to the truth of what *Tertullian* relates, as to that Book; why then should it be urged in any other respect? The Synods of *Ancyra*, and *Neocæsarea*, are omitted by *Eusebius*: Were there therefore never any such Synods? Were not their Canons received into the Code of the Catholick Church? The Council of *Nice* is little more than mentioned by him; and, how many Reasons or Accidents might occasion the omission of others?

But *Eusebius* himself does shew sufficiently, that there was a Canon of Scripture fix'd before his time, tho' he omitted the mention of those Councils, by which it was established, as *Tertullian* informs us. ^k *Eusebius* speaks of certain Books, which were acknowledged to belong to the New Testament, con-

ⁱ Cod. CCLIV.

^k Hist. l. iii. c. 3.

stor, and that they had received the controverted Books; because it appears from his words, that they had determined and established the Code of the New Testament; and these controverted Books, are upon occasion, cited by *Clemens Romanus*, *Irenaeus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and by *Tertullian* himself, which agrees with what has been alledged, that they had been approved by the Councils mentioned by *Tertullian*, and established by ancient Canons, as *St. Athanasius* affirms.

IV. Tho' uncanonical Books were read in Churches, and the Authority of some Books, which had been received into the Canon, was afterwards disputed, this doth not prove that these Books were not inserted by *St. John* into the Canon, which was attested and confirmed by those Councils, as fix'd and establish'd by him. The first Epistle of *Clemens Romanus*, and some other Treatises, were read in the Christian Assemblies, not as Canonical Scripture, but only as proper for Edification, in the nature of Homilies, and exhortations to Vertue and Piety. But in process of time, this Practice was found inconvenient: For when, under the name and countenance of some ancient Author, Errors were propagated, by this means a way was opened for them into Churches; on which account, it was found requisite to exclude from thence all Books but those of the Canonical Scriptures.

And tho' there was some disagreement about the Number of Canonical Books, after the determination of Councils, yet this only shews that these Councils were not alike known, or that their Authority was not alike acknowledged in all Churches. The Council of *Nice* was Universal, and under a Christian Emperor, who sent out his Edicts to inforce its Determinations; yet ⁿ *St. Augustin* confesses, that he, thro' ignorance, transgressed a Canon of this Council, and

ⁿ Aug. Epist. 110.

^c St.

° *St. Hilary* declares, that he had been a Bishop some time, and was to suffer Banishment for the Faith contained in the *Nicene Creed*, before he had heard the Creed it self. How much more likely then was this to befall the Determinations and Canons of Councils, which were not so general, and were held in times of Persecution? ^p *Tertullian* informs us, that Councils were very numerous, and very frequently held in *Greece*; and ^q *Justinian* says, that the Holy Apostles and Fathers ordained, that Synods of Bishops should be convened twice every Year. But it is incredible, that when Councils did so often meet, they should not determine a thing of that importance, as the Canon of Scripture is; but the Determinations of Councils were not alike known to all, or all did not equally acquiesce in them.

A learned Author has lately endeavoured to prove, that the Code of the Four Gospels was confirmed by a Council or College of the Apostles at *Ephesus*, *A. D.* *CVII.* and placed in the Archives of that See. But was any of the Apostles living at that time? Did *St. John*, the last of the Apostles, survive till then? And for the Reasons above-mentioned, there is no cause to confine the Code, confirmed and settled by *St. John*, to the Four Evangelists, or to suppose, with the same Author, that the Authority of the other Gospels was not established in the Church till *St. John* wrote his, because the other Three Gospels were approved by *St. John*; whereas, he argues, that they had not needed *St. John's* approbation, if their Authority had been certain before, or if they had been publicly known, and had not lain concealed in few hands: for which *Eusebius* is cited, tho' all this is confuted by his account in every part of it. For ^r *Eusebius* does not say, that *St. John*, at the time of

° *Hilar. de Synod. in fin.*

^q *Nov. 136. T. 20. c. 4.*

^p *De Jejun. c. 13.*

^r *Hist. l. iii. c. 24.*

his writing his own Gospel, first received and approved the other Three, but that having, by his own Testimony, confirmed the truth of them, he had received them as authentick: *Eusebius* does not say, that the other Gospels were known before but to few; but expressly, that they were known to all, and to *St. John*, as well as to others; and that *St. John* undertook the writing of his Gospel, to supply what was omitted by the former Evangelists.

As it is of great concernment to assign the time of settling the Canon of Scripture, so it is of no less consequence to observe, when the History of the Gospel, upon which the Articles of the Christian Faith depend, was committed to Writing, and publish'd to the World. ^s *Theophylact* says, that the Gospel of *St. Matthew* was written eight years after Christ's Ascension, *St. Mark's* ten, *St. Luke's* fifteen, *St. John's* thirty two years after it. I shall consider here only the time of writing *St. Matthew's* Gospel, both because it seems to be more certain than that of the rest, and because it is of more consequence, that it should be so. For when once his Gospel was publish'd, there was not so much necessity for the rest, but they might be deferr'd to such Opportunities and Occasions, as by the Divine Providence should be offer'd.

But whereas *St. Matthew*, not only by *Theophylact*, but by ^t *Euthymius*, and generally by the Accounts in ^u ancient MSS. annex'd to his Gospel, is said to have penn'd it but eight years after the Ascension of Christ; this is by some of late, upon the Authority of a Passage in *Irenæus*, set back to a much longer Period of time. Whether with sufficient Reason, I shall examine. ^x *Irenæus* says, that *St. Matthew* publish'd his Gospel, when *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* preach'd and

^s Proem. in Matt.

^t Com. in Evang. apud Mill. in N. T.

ex MS. Bodl.

^u Ham. in Matt. Mill. Proleg. p. 7.

^x L. iii. c. 1.

founded a Church at *Rome*. Now we read in ^y *Eusebius* and St. [†] *Jerom*, that St. *Peter* came to *Rome* in the second year of *Claudius*, which was eight years after the Ascension of Christ; and in ^z *Lactantius*, that he and St. *Paul* came thither, at the latter end of *Nero's* Reign. But according to what account soever we understand *Irenæus*, it cannot in strictness be said, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, at the same time, first preach'd, and laid the Foundation of a Church at *Rome*. For St. *Paul* had not been at *Rome*, when he wrote his Epistle to the Christians there, and yet their Faith was spoken of throughout the world, (Rom. i. 8, 10, 13, 15.) So that, if St. *Peter* never came to *Rome* till the latter end of *Nero's* Reign; neither he, nor St. *Paul* can be said, by preaching in person, to have founded a Church at *Rome*: but if St. *Peter*, according to *Eusebius*, planted a Church there, in the beginning of *Claudius's* Reign, and St. *Paul* afterwards by his Epistle instructed and confirm'd the *Romans* in the Principles of Religion; both St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* may be said to have preach'd the Gospel there: St. *Peter* in person, and St. *Paul* by his Epistle; and both to have founded the Church by their Ministry. Whatever way we understand *Irenæus*, his Words must be taken in a Latitude; for strictly speaking, either St. *Peter* did not first come to *Rome* with St. *Paul*, but many years before; or else neither of them planted the Church at his coming thither, but both found it already planted.

It has been alledg'd from *Irenæus*, that tho' the Christian Religion had been preach'd, yet a Church was not founded at *Rome*, till St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* had constituted *Linus* Bishop there. To which purpose, it is observ'd, that St. *Paul*, in the beginning of his Epistle to the *Romans*, styles them, *beloved of God*,

^y Chron. [†] Hieron. Catal.
c. 2. & Institut. l. iv. c. 21.

^z De Mort. Persecut.

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called to be Saints, but makes no mention of Church, or of Bishops, as he does in his Epistles to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Thessalonians, and the Philippians; whereupon it is concluded, that a Bishop having not been yet placed there, a Church was not yet founded.

But *Irenæus* writes contrary to what is urged from his Words. For he says, that the blessed Apostles having founded and erected a Church, appointed *Linus* to be Bishop, that is, when they had founded and erected a Church, or a Church being founded and erected, as *Valesius* translates the Words cited by *Eusebius*, not following the old Latin Version of *Irenæus*, which is evidently wrong, but giving the direct Sense of the Original. And it should be consider'd, that *St. Paul* writes to the Saints at *Ephesus*, and to the faithful in Christ, without mention either of Church or Bishop, though *Timothy* was then Bishop of *Ephesus*.

Thus much therefore is plain, that *Irenæus* must be understood of the first preaching the Gospel, and forming a Church at *Rome*; but it is evident, that a Church must have been form'd there, long before *St. Paul* wrote his Epistle, at which time he had never been at *Rome*; and the Faith of the Roman Christians was then so renowned, that it cannot be suppos'd to have been first preach'd there later, than the second year of *Claudius*, which agrees with the common Account of the time of writing *St. Matthew's* Gospel, *A. D.* XLII. or eight years from the Ascension of our Saviour, *St. Paul's* Epistle to the Romans being written *A. D.* LVII.

I shall, before I leave this Subject, explain a Passage of *Origen*, which has been alledged to prove, that

^a Θεμελιώσαντες ἐν τῇ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι Ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν Λίνῳ τῷ ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν. *Iren.* l. iii.

c. 3.

^b Fundatâ jam & ædificatâ Ecclesiâ. *Euseb. Hist.* l. v. c. 6.

^c Fundantes igitur & instruantes beati Apostoli Ecclesiam.

even in the time of the Apostles Christians could not agree about their Writings. *Celsus* had pretended, that if all Men would be converted, the Christians would not admit them; because as their Numbers increased, so did their Divisions; whereas at first, when they were but few, they were all of one mind. To this *Origen* replies: 1. That the Practice of Christians shewed, they were of nothing more desirous, than to make Converts to the Faith; for they declined no Pains nor Dangers to effect it. 2. That the Number of Disciples was so great before the Death of Christ, as to raise Envy and Jealousie in his Enemies. 3. That

** from the beginning there were Dissentions among the Believers concerning the Meaning or Doctrine of the Books believed to be Divine.* In the Translation of *Genenius*, which has been Printed with all the Greek Editions, it is said, that from the beginning Christians were not agreed, † concerning the choice of the Divine Books of Holy Scripture. But this is consistent neither with the Tendency and Force of *Origen's* Argument, nor with the Words, which are thus translated. For,

1. *Origen* argues, that “He (*Celsus*) says, all were of one mind, not seeing here that in the beginning Christians were not agreed, &c. How

* Φησὶ δὲ κ, ὅτι ἐν ἰσθμῶν πάντες. ἔδ' ἐν τῷ ὄρῳ ὅτι ἀρχὴν περὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς πεπιστευμένοις θεοῖς εἶναι βιβλίους ἐκδοχὴν γεγοναὶ διαφωνίας τῶν πιστευόντων· ἔτι γὰρ τῶν Ἀποστόλων κηρυσσόντων, καὶ τῶν αὐτοπῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ διδασκόντων τὰ αὐτὰ μαθήματα, ζήτησις ἐκ ὀλίγῃ πρὸς ἀλλήλους γεγένηται παρὰ τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων πιστεύουσιν περὶ τῶν ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐπερχομένων τῷ λόγῳ, πότερον δὲ τὰ Ἰουδαῖα αὐτὸς τηρεῖν ἔθνη; &c. Ait autem consensum fuisse inter omnes: ne hic quidem videns, quod mox ab initio non conveniebat inter credentes de sententiâ seu doctrinâ divinorum sacra scriptura voluminum: adhuc certè Apostolis predicantibus, & quæ ex ipso Jesu audierant, docentibus, Questio non modica inter Judæos fideles extitit, de his, qui ad hanc Doctrinam accedebant ex Gentibus, exigendine sint ab iis ritus Judaici? &c. † De delectu divinorum sacra scriptura voluminum. Adhæc Apostolis—

could *Celsus* see what was done at the beginning but from the Scriptures, from which he now argued, and in which he pretended to be much conversant? And he is therefore censured by *Origen* for not observing what he might have plainly discerned in the Scriptures. But how could he know from them, that while the Apostles were yet living, there was any disagreement about the Choice or Number of their inspired Writings? In what part of Scripture could he read of any Debate or Controversy of this kind? In none certainly. But how far the Law of *Moses* was obligatory amongst Christians was matter of Dispute, and there were also Differences in other Points.

To the Scriptures therefore, from whence *Celsus* had fetched his Arguments, *Origen* appeals, and shews that no small Debate arose, whether the converted Gentiles were under any obligation to observe the Law, *Acts* xv. 5. that there were Disputes concerning the Resurrection, *1 Cor.* xv. and touching the Day of Judgment, whether it were at hand, *2 Thess.* ii. 2. And he concludes, that St. *Paul's* exhortation to avoid profane and vain babblings, and opposition of Science falsely so called, which some professing, have erred concerning the Faith, *1 Tim.* vi. 20. manifests that there were misinterpretations of the Christian Doctrine, when, as *Celsus* imagined, Believers were yet but few.

2. The words of *Origen* will not bear *Gelenius's* Translation. For ἐκδοχή does not signify the Choice, but the Meaning, the Sense and Doctrine of the Books of Scripture; the receiv'd and approv'd Explication of the Points there mention'd by *Origen*. And as this is styled by him ἐκδοχή, so the profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of Science falsely so called, are styled by him παρεκδοχαί, misinterpretations or false Doctrines; and so the perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt minds, are by the Apostle called ἀπορροιαί, *1 Tim.* vi. 5. That I have here represented the true import

import of ἐκδοχή will fully appear by the use of ἐκδοχή and ἐκδέχομαι in the Writings of * *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and † *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria*; the first was the Master, the latter a Scholar of *Origen*.

It is therefore evident, both from the Words of *Origen*, and from the coherence of Sense, and his Method of arguing, that nothing was in this place said by him relating to any difference concerning the choice or select Number of Books inspired; but he is to be understood of the Meaning and Exposition of Scripture, which is accurately and elegantly express'd in the former ² Latin Translation.

* Δηλωτικόν ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γεγονότι τινες παρεκδοχαί.

† ὁ γὰρ μοι δοκεῖ ἰσθαῖκῶς ἐκδέχεσθαι δὲν τὸ ρητόν. *Non enim mihi videtur dictum Judaicè accipiendum.* Clem. Alex. *Pædag.* l. i. p. 98. "Ἡ γὰρ ἐκ ἕως τινὲς τῶν ἡμετέρων, τὸ μὲν κατ' εἰκόνα, δὴθέως κατὰ γένεσιν εἰληφέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. τὸ καὶ ὁμοίωσιν δὲ, ὕστερον κατὰ τὴν τελείωσιν μέλλειν ἀπολαμβάνειν ἐκδέχονται. An non sic quidam ex nostris ad imaginem statim in ortu accipisse hominem; ad similitudinem autem per perfectionem postea esse accepturum, intelligunt? Strom. 2. p. 418. Ἠλάττωσας αὐτόν, φησι, βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλων; ὁ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ κυρίᾳ ἐκδέχεται τὴν γενεάν, καίτοι κακῶν σάρκα ἔφερον. minuit eum, inquit, paulo minus ab Angelis. De Domino enim non accipiunt scripturam, quanquam ille quoque carnem ferebat, Strom. 4. p. 477. Κακωμένον εἶναι τινὰ καὶ θαυμασιωτέραν τὴν κατ' εἰκόνα ἐκδοχὴν ἀπολαμβάνω. καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴ συνίημι, ἀλλ' ὑπονοῶ γε νῦν τινὰ βαθύτερον ἐνκεῖσθαι τοῖς ρήμασι. Arcanam quandam planèque admirabilem singularum rerum intelligentiam latere existimo. Nam etsi ipse non intelligo, suspicor tamen altiore quendam sensum verbis subesse. Dionys. Alex. de Apocalypsi apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. vii. c. 25.

² Dixit præterea, & unum omnes tunc primum sensisse; at, ubi in multitudinem evaserunt, diversa. Cum nihil interea, vel ea in re animum ipse intendat; quandoquidem variè vel à Principiis de his senserint Christiani, quæ libris, quos sacros nunciant, tradita sunt. Edit. Paris. 1512. Edit. Erasmi. 1536.

CHAP. V.

Of the various Readings in the Old and New Testament.

IT is to be observ'd, that an extraordinary Providence has, in a great measure, secur'd the Holy Scriptures from those Casualties which are incident to humane Writings. For the great Antiquity of many Books of the Scriptures, beyond that of any other Books in the World, the multitude of Copies, which have been taken in all Ages and Nations, the difficulty to avoid mistakes in transcribing Books, in a Language which has so many of its Letters, and of its Words themselves so like one another, the defect of the *Hebrew* Vowels, and the late invention (as it is generally now acknowledged) of the Points, the change of the *Samaritan*, or ancient *Hebrew* for the present *Hebrew* Character, the Captivity of the whole Nation of the *Jews* for seventy Years, and the mixtures and changes which were, during that time, brought into their Language; in short, all the accidents which have ever happened to occasion Errors or Mistakes in any Book, have concurred to cause them in the Old Testament; and yet the different Readings are much fewer, and make much less alteration in the Sense, than those of any other Book of the same bigness, and of any Note and Antiquity, if all the Copies should be carefully examined, and every little variation as punctually set down, as those of the Scriptures have been. The use only of Abbreviations, so common in all Languages, had caused such confusion in the *Roman* Laws, that ^a *Justinian* found it necessary to forbid, under severe Penalties, that any

^a Justinian. Praef. ad Digest. & ad Cod. Isidor. Orig. l. 1. c. 22.

130 *The Reasonableness and Certainty*

should transcribe them for the future, without writing the Names of Men, and the Titles and Numbers of the Books at full length. But tho' from hence it may appear, that a peculiar Providence has been concerned in the preservation of the Books of the Scriptures, yet from humane Considerations and Arguments, we may likewise be assured, that nothing prejudicial to the Authority of the Scriptures has happened by any of these means.

1. The defect in the *Hebrew* Vowels, and the late Invention of the Points, is no prejudice to the Authority of the Bible, as we now have it. Tho' the Points, which critically determine the exact reading of the *Hebrew* Tongue, be of a later Invention, yet that Tongue was never without its Vowels. For *Aleph*, *Vau*, and *Jod*, and (which some add) *He* and *Gnajm*, before the Invention of the Points, were used as Vowels, as it is evidently proved from ^b *Josephus*, *Origen*, and *St. Jerom*, by the best Criticks in that Language. It must indeed be confess'd, that these Vowels could not be so effectual to ascertain the true Reading, as the Points have since been; but whatever defect there might be in the Vowels, it was supplied by constant Use and Practice, and by some general Rules, which they observed in the Reading. The Bible being a Book, which, by Divine Commandment, was so often and carefully read both in publick and private, the *Hebrew* Text might be exactly read, and the true sense certainly retain'd and known; and it is no wonder, that by constant use, and continual practice and custom from their Infancy, the *Jews* could read it with ease and readiness without Points, which is no more than is ordinarily done now by Men, who are skilful in that Language; and divers have attain'd to it by their own Observation and Industry. If there were the more difficulty in the *He*

^b Vid. Walton. Prolegom. iii. §. 49.

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brew Tongue before the invention of Points, there was the more care and study used about it; the Jews having Times purposely set apart for the reading of the Law, studied it with that diligence and exactness, that they knew it as well as they did their own Names; or better, as ^c Josephus expresses it, if that were possible; and they used so great accuracy both in their Pronouncing and Writing, that there could be no danger that any considerable mistake should be occasioned by any defect in the Vowels before the Points were found out. This was a great part of the Jewish Learning, (as ^d Bishop Walton observes) the true reading of the Text, and they who were most accurate and exact therein, were honoured most amongst 'em, and had their Schools, and their Scholars and Disciples, whom they instructed from time to time, till at length, in regard of their many Dispersions and Banishments, that the true Reading might not be lost with the Language, they began to affix Points to the Text, as well to facilitate the Reading, as to preserve it the better from any Alteration or Change.

But this is an Objection which never could have been made but in the Western Parts of the World; for in the East they commonly write yet without Points, as the ^{*} Jews likewise write the Western Languages of the Countries where they live, without Points, in the Hebrew Character. The ^e Samaritans still have no Points. And the ^f Children of the Turks, Arabians, and Persians, and generally of all the Mahometans, learn to read without them. ^g Isaac Vossius says, the Asiatics laugh at the Europeans, because they cannot read as they do, without Vowels. ^h Schie-

^c Joseph. contr. Ap. lib. ii.

Juda cum ediscunt, & servant, & metuunt jus.

Juven. Sat. 14.

^d Considerat. considered, c. x. §. 8.

^{*} Vid. Buxtorf. Catalect.

^e Walt. Prolegom. iii. §. 40. Morin. Epist. 15. & 70.

^f Joseph. Scalig. Epist. 243.

^g Voss. de Sibyll. Orac.

^h Walt. Prolegom. iii. §. 50.

kard confess'd, that he had known Children of seven Years of Age, read the *Pentateuch* merely by use. ⁱ *Clenard*, and *Erpenius* himself, who was so famous for the *Arabick*, and other Eastern Languages, both of them declared, that they learned the *Arabick* only by their own study and diligence from Books without Points: and *Erpenius* had attained to such accuracy in that Language, before he had read any Book with the Points, that *Isaac Casaubon* so far approved of the Translation which he had then made, of the *Arabick Nubian Geography* into *Latin*, that he was very earnest with him to publish it. *Ludovicus Capellus* besides, gives an instance from his own knowledge of one, who, when he had scarce been taught the *Arabick* Alphabet, made a great progress in that Tongue in four Months, only by his own industry, and without the help of Points.

All these things considered, it would be a strange Paradox to pretend, that there is no certainty in the ancient Eastern way of writing, and that no body can certainly know what their Authors meant, nay, that they did not know one another's meaning, as well as we do now in our manner of writing, before some certain time, when the Points are supposed to be first found out. It must be acknowledged, that several words have different significations, according to the difference of the Points; but this Objection may as well be brought against the vulgar *Latin*, or against any Book in the *Latin* Tongue: For there is no regular *Latin* Verb, which, in the forming of it, has not some words of different significations, according to the different Voices, and Moods and Tenses: And *Lego* being both of the first and of the third Conjugation, *Legere* has six different significations, and is thrice to be pronounced long, and thrice short; and yet all these Senses are easily distinguish'd by Chil-

ⁱ Lud. Capel. de Punct. Hebr. Antiqu. lib. ii. c. 27. §. 4, 5, 6.

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dren, without Accents. *Amare* has also six significations, four from *Amo*, and two from *Amarus*. *Malo*, has seven different Significations, as a Verb; and as a Noun in the Ablative or Dative Case; whereby it may be understood of an evil Man or Thing, of the Evil of Sin, or of Punishment, of an Apple or Apple-tree, or of the Mast of a Ship. But such Instances are so obvious, and yet so little observed, that I know no Man that has thought them worth the mentioning; nor should I have done it, but upon this occasion.

II. The change of the Old *Hebrew* Character into that now in use, is no prejudice to the Authority of the *Hebrew* Text; because this was but the writing over that, which was before in one Alphabet into another, the Language being still the same: And this, if it were done with sufficient care (as we have all the reason in the world to believe it was) could make no material mistakes; and we find it hath not, by the agreement between the *Hebrew* and the *Samari-tan Pentateuch* still extant.

III. The *Keri* and the *Ketib*, or the difference in some places between the Text and the Marginal Reading, is no prejudice to the Authority of the Scripture. For as the various Lectons of the Bible are much fewer, considering the Antiquity of it, and the vast numbers of Copies, which have been transcribed in all Ages and Countries, than those of any other Book: so many of them may be easily reconciled, and the occasion of them as easily discovered. Some of them were occasioned by the likenesses of several of the *Hebrew* Letters, which were not easily to be distinguish'd in books written in such small Characters, as *St. Jerome* complains, were used in writing the *Hebrew* Bibles of his time. Others happen'd from Abbreviations, and some might proceed from Marginal Glosses. The transcribing what was at first written

* Hieron. Proæm. in Ezech. Comment. lib. 8.

in the Margin into the Text, has proved one chief occasion of various Readings, and for this reason it seems to be, that the *See of Rome*, permitting various Lectures to be collected, has yet prohibited them to be set in the Margin of the vulgar *Latin Editions*, to prevent that confusion, which in process of time might from thence ensue.

It must likewise be observ'd, that all the words we meet with in the Margin of the *Hebrew Bibles*, are not to be look'd upon as various Lectures; for divers of them were placed there, by the *Jews*, out of superstition, because they scrupled to pronounce certain words, and therefore appointed others to be read in their stead. Thus the *Water of their Feet* is the *Hebrew Marginal Reading*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 27. which is omitted by our Translators, *Isa.* xxxvi. 12. tho' the *Keri* be the same in both places. But when the *Jews* were dispersed into divers Countries, their Dialect or manner of Pronunciation must needs be different, and as the same words were pronounced differently, so they would in time be differently written, which gave one chief occasion to the various Lectures in the *Old Testament*; for from the emulation between the Schools of the *Jews* at *Babylon* and those at *Jerusalem*, there arose a set of various Lectures under the Title of the *Eastern* and the *Western Readings*, but it is acknowledged, that¹ they are of no moment, and that as to the sense, it is much at one which reading is admitted, for they concern Matters of Orthography, rather than of Orthodoxy, as *Buxtorf* speaks; the words are the same, but differently written and pronounced, as is visible by the^m Catalogues of both Readings. Thus when the *Gileadites* said *Shibboleth*, and the *Ephraimites* *Sibboleth*, they differed only in Pronunciation,

¹ Vid. Walt. Proleg. 8. §. 28.

^m Apud. Druf. De rectâ Lectione Ling. Sanct. c. 50. Polyglot. Tom. 6.

Judges xii. 6. and the Jews of Palestine and of Europe, who follow the Western Readings, yet do not altogether reject the Eastern; but in some Editions have printed them both. The different Readings of ⁿ Ben Ascher and Ben Naphtali had the same Original, the Eastern Jews following the one, and the Western observing the other, but these concern the Points and Accents only, and not either the Words or Letters.

There is no ancient Book in the World, of which we can be certain, that we rightly understand it, if it be necessary to the right understanding of a Book, that it be without various Lectiōs; for what Book is there without 'em; or what Book of the same bigness, and of any Antiquity, has so few various Lectiōs as the Bible? and what Book can be transcribed or printed, but it is liable to have Mistakes made in it?

IV. No difference between the *Hebrew* Text and the *Septuagint*, and other Versions, or between the several Versions themselves, is any Prejudice to the Authority of the Scriptures, nor can prove that the *Hebrew* Text was ever different in any thing material from what it is now. The Translation of the *Septuagint* °, as it hath been observ'd from St. *Jerom*, and others, is in many places rather a Comment or Paraphrase, than a strict Version, and gives the Sense, rather than the Words of the *Hebrew* Text. Many times there is supposed to be a Difference, where there is none, for want of a sufficient Knowledge of the Original, as ^p Dr. *Pocock* has shewn in divers Instances, and Bishop *Pearson* in others, besides what has been written by *Isaac Vossius* to this purpose: * The *LXX* Version in many places gives that Sense of the *Hebrew* Words, which they have in the *Syriack* Tongue. And

ⁿ Id. Proleg. iv. §. 9. ° Id. Prolegom. ix. §. 12. & x. §. 8.

^p Pocock Append. ad Port. Mos. c. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pearf. Præf. ad Septuag. Edit. Cantab. If. Voss. de lxx. Interpret. Walt. Prol. ix. 46.

* Fuller. Miscell. l. i. c. 7.

one very skilful in the Oriental Tongues, had undertaken to shew the Agreement between the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* throughout, and had made a considerable Progress in the Work, as Bp. *Walton* informs us. Sometimes Differences proceed from the Mistakes of Transcribers, as it must needs happen in Books, of which so many Copies have been taken in all Ages; and from the Rashness of Criticks in making unnecessary Alterations, or by inserting into the Text such Notes, as were at first plac'd only for Explication in the Margin. Thus it happen'd to St. *Jerom's* Annotations, in his own Life-time, as he ^q complains. In some things of less consequence, the Translators might be mistaken, or they might follow a different Copy.

The Authority of the Text of Scripture is greatly confirm'd from the Citations of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers, from whence it appears that in the several Ages of the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches, the Copies which they made use of had no such Variations from those we now use, as to be of any ill consequence in matters of Religion.

As to the Imputation that was charged upon the *Jews* by some of the Fathers, that they had corrupted the Scriptures in such places, as, according to the Translation of the *Septuagint*, and the Sense of their Ancestors, must prove the Truth of the Christian Religion against them; this is to be understood of the Versions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*, who being all either profess'd *Jews*, or Judaizing Hereticks, ^r design'd their Translations to countenance their own Errors, especially *Aquila*, who undertook his Version, purposely to oppose that of the *Septuagint*. Such of the Fathers, as did not understand the *Hebrew* Tongue, might think that the Variations from the *Septuagint*, in those Versions, proceeded from Al-

^q Epist. ad Syn. & Fretell.

^r Iren. l. iii. c. 24.

terations made in the *Hebrew Text*, since that Translation. But we now find the Difference between the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* not to be such, as that the *Jews* can take any great Advantage from it. St. ^t *Jerom* declared, that the *Hebrew Text* was more serviceable in proof and confirmation of the Gospel, than the *Greek Versions*.

The *Jews* were so far from making Alterations designedly in the Sacred Text, that if but some ^t one word happened to be altered in any Copy, it was to be laid aside as useless, unless it were given to some very poor Man, that he might teach his Children by it, upon condition, that he made no other use of it, nor brought it to the Synagogue. This scrupulous Cautiousness prevail'd so far, that among the many Factions of *Pharisees*, and *Sadducees*, and *Essens*, and other Sects, ^u it was never known, that in any of their Disputes and Contentions, they accused each other of falsifying or altering the Text of Scripture to serve their Cause. We may be assured, that the *Jews* had made no Alteration in the *Hebrew Text* at the time of Christ's Incarnation, because neither our blessed Saviour himself, nor his Apostles, in their frequent Re-proofs, ever charged them with depraving the Scriptures, but appealed to these, as they were then read by the *Jews*, in Testimony and Confirmation of the Christian Faith and Doctrine. And it is a sufficient Evidence that the *Hebrew Text* has since suffered nothing from them, because the strongest Arguments against their Infidelity are produced from those places, in which the Reading is certain and undisputed. I instance in *Isai. liii.* ^w *Johannes Isaac* a learned *Jew* declared, that he was converted by reading that Chapter in his own Language, and the five *Rabbins*, with whom he held a Dispute at *Frankford*, were silenced

^t Hieron. Ep. ad Marcellam, Tom. 3. p. 312. & Comment. in Hierem. xvii.

^r Johan. Isaac Defens. veritat. Hebr. p. 68.

^u Ib. p. 70.

^w P. 82.

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by his Arguments from thence. ^x *Andradius* also affirms, that he knew some Men of good Learning, and of great Wealth among the *African Jews*, who by reading it became fully convinced of the truth of our Religion, and left their Country, and forsook all for Christ and his Gospel. And it is now generally agreed, that the *Jews* never deserv'd the Censure of having corrupted the *Hebrew Text*; but they perverted the Sense of it, and where there were various Readings, chose to follow that which was most favourable to their own Pretences, though it were in contradiction to the Judgment of their Fore-fathers, as well as the Christians; tho' it were even impossible to make Sense of it, as in that famous Text, *Psal. xxii. 16.* where the Change of *jod* for *vau* seems first to have been occasion'd by a Mistake of some Transcriber. For *Caari* was in the Margin, before it was brought into the Text, as appears from the *Masora*. *Philo* in a Discourse cited ^z by *Eusebius* (who thereby owns the Truth of it) said, that for the space of above two thousand Years, there had not been a Word alter'd in the Law, but that the *Jews* would choose to die never so many deaths, rather than they would consent to any thing in prejudice of it. And ^a *Josephus* declares of the whole Old Testament, that it had suffer'd no Alteration, from the beginning down to his own Time. ^b *Morinus* himself, whatever he hath elsewhere said to the contrary, declares in a Letter to *Dr. Comber* Dean of *Carlisle*, that he supposes no Man can doubt, but that the *Jewish Copies*, *ceteris paribus*, are to be preferr'd before any Copies of the *Samaritans*, which he in his Writings so highly magnifies.

^x Andrad. Defens. Fidei Trident. l. 3. p. 602.

^y Vid. Bochart. Hieroz. Pt. i. l. iii. c. 6. & Joh. Isaaci Levitæ Defens. vestitat. Hebr. p. 112.

^z Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. viii. c. 6.

^a Contra Apion. l. i.

^b Antiq. Eccl. Orient.

Epist. 38.

It must be acknowledg'd, that the numbering of the Verses and Words and Letters, and the observing which was the Middle Letter of every Book, could signify little to the securing of the *Hebrew* Text entire, because there may be the same Number of Verses, and Words, and Letters in different Books, and the same number of Letters may make up different Words, and the same Words diversly plac'd and apply'd, may express a very different Sense: nor could there be any Charm in a Word, that stood in the midst of a Book, to keep all the rest in their proper places. But this scrupulous and even superstitious Diligence of the *Jews*, in little things, is an Evidence of their constant Study of the Scripture, and of the great Value and Reverence they had for it, so that they would neither corrupt it themselves, nor suffer it to be corrupted by others; but were careful and zealous to preserve every Letter and Tittle; and as I observ'd before from *Josephus*, they were so well acquainted with it, that he thought he could not fully enough express their Skill and Accuracy, but by saying that they knew it better than their own Names. Our blessed Saviour, as was before observed, who so frequently reproves the Scribes and Pharisees, for their Traditions and false Glosses, never charges them with corrupting the Text; as he certainly would have done, if they had been guilty of it. And afterwards they could not corrupt it, without Discovery by the converted *Jews*, who were very numerous in *Jerusalem*, till the Destruction of it, and many of them were living long after.

V. It is evident, and confess'd by the Criticks, that neither by these, nor by any other means, any such Difference is to be found in the several Copies of the Bible, as to prejudice the fundamental Points of Religion, or weaken the Authority of the Scriptures. All relating to this Controversy has been eagerly debated by contending Parties, who yet agree in this, what-

whatever they differ'd in besides, that the various Lectures do not invalidate the Authority of the Scriptures, nor render them ineffectual to the End and Design of a Divine Revelation, inasmuch as all the various Lectures taken together, are no Prejudice to the Analogy of Faith, nor to any Points necessary to Salvation. ^c *Ludovicus Capellus*, who had study'd this Subject as much as any Man, and was as well able to judge of it, after the strictest Examination he could make, found, that the things relating either to Faith or Practice, are plainly contain'd in all Copies, whatever Difference there is in lesser things, as in matters of Chronology, which depend upon the Alteration, or the Omission or Addition of a Letter, or in the Names of Men, or of Cities or Countries. But the fundamental Doctrines of Religion are so dispers'd throughout the Scriptures, that they could receive no Damage nor Alteration, unless the whole Scriptures should have been changed. Wherefore not only the most learned Protestants, but ^d *Bellarmin* himself, and the best Criticks amongst the Papists have acknowledg'd, that all things relating to Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life, are deliver'd entire and uncorrupted in the Scriptures, notwithstanding the various Lectures. And though some of the *Roman* Communion have endeavour'd to prove the Necessity of an infallible Church, by Arguments drawn from hence; yet

^c *Non minus ex iis, quæ supra disputata sunt, planum est, id quod statim libri primi initio monuimus. & sæpius toto opere inculcavimus, plerasque omnes, quæ observari & deprehendi in sacris libris possunt, varias lectiones, levissimi esse ac penè nullius momenti, ut parùm admodum intersit, aut verò perinde omnino sit, utram sequeris, sive hanc, sive illam.* Ludovic. Capel. Crit. Sacr. l. vi. c. 2.

^d *Ceterum non tanti momenti sunt ejusmodi errores, ut in iis quæ ad fidem & bonos mores pertinent, Scriptura Sacra integritas desideretur. Plerumque enim tota discrepantiâ variarum lectionum in dictionibus quibusdam posita est, quæ sensum aut parùm, aut nihil mutant.* Bellarmin. de Verbo Dei, l. ii. c. 2. Andrad. Defens. Fidei Nicen.

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says ^e Bishop Walton, I do not remember, that in any particular Controversy between them and us, they urge any one place of Scripture, for their Cause, upon the Uncertainty of the Reading without Points; which plainly shews, that there is no such Uncertainty in the Text unpointed, as is pretended. F. ^f Simon complains, that the Catalogues of various Lections are much larger than they ought to be, and that for the most part they are of no moment, and he charges Capellus more than once, with multiplying 'em without Reason. Morinus indeed made it his Endeavour to lessen the Authority of the Hebrew Text in favour of the Septuagint, and the Vulgar Latin; but his Authority is very inconsiderable; when compared with those of the same Communion, who have declar'd themselves against his Opinion. In § the Life of Morinus; written by F Simon, there is this Character of Capellus and Morinus, that if they be compared as to what they have both written concerning the Bible, Morinus shews more Learning in his Books, but it is very often not to the purpose; whereas Capellus has more Sagacity and Judgment, and never wanders from his Subject, but proves what he is upon, by the strongest Arguments. And as severe as this Censure may seem to be, yet it is justified in effect, by the confession of Morinus himself. For he ^h acknowledgeth to Buxtorf, that he never thoroughly apply'd himself to the Study of the Hebrew Tongue, that he had read nothing in Hebrew for seven Years together, and that therefore he did not question, but he had made many Mistakes, especially in his Samaritan Exercitations, great part of which were written in haste, and he was forc'd to use such a variety of Authors, that he believes it impossible, but that he must have been often mistaken. The

^e Considerator considered, c. xii. §. 4.

^f Hist. Crit. V. T. l. iii. c. 23. § Joh. Morin. Vit.

^h Epist. 70. inter Antiq. Eccl. Orient.

Authority of *Morinus* then signifies nothing in prejudice to the *Hebrew Text*. And ⁱ *Spinoza* himself has own'd, that he could for certain affirm, that he had observ'd no Fault nor various Reading, which concern'd the Moral Precepts, that could render them obscure or doubtful. ^k *If. Vossius* says, that no Copy is so faulty, but it contains all things necessary to Salvation.

Bishop *Walton* has, with great Learning and Judgment, summ'd up the Arguments on all sides, and as ^l *F. Simon* acknowledgeth, has examin'd this matter with more Exactness than all that had gone before him. His Polyglot Bibles give an ocular Demonstration to the Truth of what he maintains, that there is nothing of consequence, either as to Faith or Practice, concern'd in the difference of the several Copies of the *Hebrew Text*, or of the several Versions. And as many Sects and Divisions as there are amongst Christians, and as many different Translations as they make use of, they all acknowledge the Authority of the Originals, and their Translations in the main are the same; however, they disagree in rendring some particular Passages, which concern the different Opinions of the several Parties, and upon that account maintain their own Translation to be more correct than others. If we allow of ^m *Mr. Selden's* Judgment, who was very able to make a true one, and far enough from being prejudiced in the case, he says, *the English Translation of the Bible is the best Translation in the World, and renders the sense of the Original best, taking in for the English Translation the Bishop's Bible, as well*

ⁱ Hoc pro certo affirmare possum, me nullam animadvertisse mendam, nec lectionum varietatem, circa moralia documenta, quæ ipsa obscura aut dubia reddere possunt. Tractat. Theolog. Polit. c. 9.

^k Nullum tam mendosum est Exemplar, quod non pro sacræ Scripturæ debeat haberi. Abundè & copiosè è quibusvis sacrorum librorum codicibus omnia ad salutem & fidem necessaria possunt hauriri. De Translat. LXX. Interp. c. 10.

^l Crit. Hist. V. T. l. iii. c. 21.

^m Table-Talk.

as King James's. However, by different Translations, and by comparing divers Copies and Versions to make out the true Reading, many Texts become better understood, and more fully explained, than if there had been but one Reading, and no difference in the Translations.

VI. And no less may be said in behalf of the New Testament than of the Old; for the Books of it were kept from the beginning as a sacred Treasure, with great Care and Reverence, and were constantly read in the Christian Assemblies, and soon translated into all Languages. The Primitive Christians chose to undergo any Torments, rather than they would deliver up the Books of Scripture to their Persecutors to be destroyed, and they were no less careful to preserve them uncorrupted by Hereticks. Besides, when Hereticks attempted to corrupt any Text of Scripture to serve their particular Heresies, they were declared against, not only by the Orthodox, but by other Hereticks, who were not concerned for those Opinions, in behalf whereof the Corruption was intended. So that it was impossible for any Corruptions to be imposed upon the Church, or to pass undiscovered even by some of the Hereticks themselves. They must be designed for some End, and to authorize some particular Doctrines, and then all, who were not for those Doctrines, and more especially those who were against them, would certainly oppose such Corruptions. God, who, for such wise Reasons, permits Heresies, that we are told, they *must be*, 1 Cor. xi. 19. may, for the like Reasons, permit various Lections, and other Accidents, to befall the Scriptures, which, through the Sins of Men, prove an encouragement or pretence to the introduction and support of Heretical Doctrines: yet these Heresies, at the same time, serve as one means of security against wilful and dangerous Alterations.

The agreement likewise of the *Greek Text* of the New Testament, with the several ancient Versions, and with the Quotations found in the Writings of the Fathers, who cited and alledged them from the Times of the Apostles, proves that there have been no alterations of any such consequence, as to make the Scriptures insufficient for the Ends of a Divine Revelation. If any Man be of another Opinion, let him instance in any one Article of Faith, or Rule of Life, which cannot be proved from the Scriptures. It is not enough for him to shew, that some one or more Texts, which have been brought in proof of it, are disputed, but he must shew that it can be proved by no Text, which is clear and undisputed. Most of the various Lectons in the New Testament are either of no moment, being in synonymous words, or expletive Particles, or they are so apparent *Errata*, that they may easily be discerned and corrected. There is hardly ^a one Text, which concerns any Article of Faith, that has such a different Reading, as is contrary to sound Doctrine, and if it be contrary, yet the same Doctrines are taught in so many several places of Scripture, that the different Reading of one or two Texts can be no prejudice to the constant Tenour and undoubted Reading of so many other. The want of Accents, and Points, and distinction of words in ancient MSS. Abbreviations, the likeness of Words or Letters, and the repetition of the same Word, whereby it sometimes came to pass, that the intermediate Sentence was left out by Transcribers: These are common Accidents, which have occasioned various Lectons in all Books. But it happened besides, that *Harmonies* of the Gospels being drawn up, whether for publick or private use, wherein the Texts of the several Evangelists, relating to the same thing, were set in different Co-

^a Vid. Præf. ad Gr. Test. Oxon. 1675.

lums, the Transcribers sometimes ^o inserted the words of one Evangelist into the Text of another ; and the same confusion was made in other Books of Scripture, by removing the Words of parallel places from the Margin into the Text. And the *Gospels* and *Epistles* in the Liturgies, had such Alterations, or Additions, as were requisite to make the Sense compleat in such Parts of Scripture, as were selected for that purpose ; which Alterations were afterwards transcribed into the Books of Scripture ; as if *John xxi. 19. he saith unto him, follow me*, should from ^P our Liturgy, be altered into, *Jesus said unto Peter, follow me*. But such as these, and many others, which help to swell the number of various Lections, make no variations in the Sense.

The various Lections of the Holy Scriptures, are so far from being an Argument against their Authority, that they rather help to prove it, since they are comparatively so few in a Book of so great Antiquity. For no care and regard, inferiour to that, which we must suppose Men to have of a Book, which they are convinced is of Divine Authority, could have produced so less variety of Readings in a Book of much less Antiquity. They are all of no consequence to the pre- judice of the End and Design of a Revelation ; and therefore they come under the number of such Accidents, as God cannot be obliged in his providence to prevent. But the Bible could not, without the signal providence of God, have been preserved for so many Ages, under so many Changes and Revolutions, which the Wisdom of God, for Reasons elsewhere observed, would not fit to permit, much less could it have escaped with so inconsiderable Variations, in the many Copies taken, and Versions made in different Ages and di-

^o *Quod in eadem re alius Evangelista plus dixit, in alio, quia minus putaverint, addiderunt.* Hieron in 4. Evang. Præf. ad Damas.
^P Gospel for St. John the Evangelist's Day.

stant Countries, unless it had been secured by a particular Providence, from those Corruptions and Alterations, which are so frequent in Humane Writings. The measure of Verse is a great security against any change of words, especially in the Latin and Greek Poets, where the quantity of Syllables is exactly to be observed. *Virgil's* words are so accurately chosen, that scarce any change can be made without discovery; and his Works have ever been in so great esteem, and are of such a size, as to be retained almost by heart, by the Grammarians. It is no wonder therefore, that the Writings of *Virgil* are found to have come down to us with as little variation, as those of any ancient Author. Nevertheless the Collections, which *Pierius Valerianus* has made of the most material variations only, out of a few Copies, contains a vast number. And **Is. Vossius* has declared, that if the old MSS. were collated, there would scarce be found one Verse without some difference.

What has been said upon this Subject, is confirmed by the large and laborious Collection of various Readings lately published upon the New Testament; for that learned Author, with the incredible pains and study of near ⁹ Thirty Years, has revised whatever had been done by others before him in this way, and has made many Additions of his own, out of MSS. and printed Copies, in all Languages, that had not been consulted, or not sufficiently examined. He has, in collating ¹ one Edition, added above ^s Seven hundred various Lectures, which *R. Stephens* had omitted, not thinking them, it seems, considerable enough to be inserted. He has not omitted the Collections of *Pertrus Faxardus*, Marquess of *Veles*, tho' he had once ¹ rejected them as insignificant, but was at last per-

* Castigat. ad object. Hornii.

⁹ Mill. Prolegom. in N. T. p. 167.

^s P. 162.

¹ P. 138, 167.

¹ Edit. Complut.

suaded by some Friend, against his own Opinion, to put them into the *Appendix*. He has noted every Addition, and Omission, and Variation, which has been observed of any Word, or Syllable, and even of any Letter, or Point, or Accent, in any ancient Copy, in all Languages, throughout the New Testament. He has examined the Citations of all ancient Authors, and has given us the History of the Text of Scripture, shewing, as he says, in what state and condition it has been in every Age, since the first propagation of the Gospel to this time. In short, nothing has been wanting to encrease the Number, or add to the weight of various Lectons. But after all this care and diligence, he declares, that ^u much the greatest part of the various Lectons have been occasioned by Parallel Places of the *Gospels*, written in the Margin, which afterwards were, by Transcribers, inserted in the Text; and that, in his Collection, above One thousand six hundred various Lectons are of this sort: That ^x the Canon of Scripture never suffered any corruption by Hereticks: And ^y that this great number of various Lectons can be no cause of doubt or suspicion to judicious Men, of the Authority of the *Greek Text*, but is, on the contrary, a means to prove and confirm the truth and certainty of it. And he has effectually shewn that controverted Verse, *John v. 7.* to be Authentick, by considering all that has been on both sides produced. But it should be considered, that most of the MSS which have of late been collated, may very probably be the same, which had been collated before, and which are now cited under other Titles, from Authors, who had collected out of them the various Lectons and published them. Thus the same Manuscripts may be twice or oftner set down for any variation, under different names;

^u P. 71.

^y P. 143.

^x P. 75. & Not. in 1 Joh. v. 7. p. 746, 747.

so that a various Lection, which seems to have many Manuscripts to vouch for it, may possibly have but one. And therefore the Antiquity and Worth of the Manuscripts is to be regarded, as far as it can be known and estimated, rather than the number, which is uncertain and impossible to be determined. The variations likewise in the several Editions of the New Testament, are commonly taken from those Editions, which had been Printed before. The Learned Dr. Mill does not seem to have been sufficiently aware of this in his *Notes*, but he endeavours to adjust the Matter in his *Appendix*; and in his *Prolegomena* he informs us how far the several printed Editions have borrowed from each other. But it was impossible for him to give the same account of all the Manuscript Copies, from which the various Readings have been collected, and to acquaint us, what is become of them.

Many Men ever since the Reformation, both in our own, and other Countries, who understood Religion best, and were most zealous in defence of it, have been most forward and industrious to publish the Bible in all Languages, and with the various Lections of each Language. And whatever some may hope, and others fear, Experience hath shewn, that they have been no prejudice, but an advantage to Religion, and afford an ocular demonstration, how Christians of all Nations and Languages agree, both in the Canon, and in the Text of Scripture.

C H A P. VI.

Of the difficulties in Chronology in the Holy Scriptures.

Chronology is the part of Learning, which is most nice and difficult to be exactly adjusted, because it depends upon so many several Circumstances, and comprehends so great a variety of Affairs in all Ages and Nations, and how punctually soever the Accounts of Time be set down at first, yet the least alterations in one Word, or Letter, may cause a great difference in Copies, and the difference of *Epoches* in the computations of different Countries, especially at great distances of Time as well as Place, is such, that the exactest Chronology may easily be mistaken, and may be farther entangled and perplex'd by those, who endeavour to rectifie what they think amiss; for that which was exact at first, is often made faulty by him who thought it so before. But I suppose, that no material Exception will lie against the Scripture upon the account of any difficulties in Chronology, if these two things be made out. I. That differences in Chronology do not infer uncertainty in the Matters of Fact themselves. II. That differences in Chronology do not imply, that there was any Chronological Mistake made by the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures; but that they have been occasioned by the mistakes of Transcribers or of Expositors.

I. Differences in Chronology do not infer uncertainty in the Matters of Fact themselves: Because the point of Time is but one Circumstance, and that easily mistaken by a thousand Accidents; and there may be many other circumstances so particular, and so well attested, as to give sufficient evidence to the truth of things related, notwithstanding any uncertainty in the

circumstance of Time. For which reason ^a *Plutarch* did not reject the relation of a Discourse that pass'd between *Solon* and *Craſus*, tho' he could not answer the Objections brought from Chronology to prove it feign'd, because he found it delivered by good Authors, and saw nothing improbable in it, but every thing very likely and suitable to *Solon's* temper; and he thought it unreasonable to reject a Matter of Fact, which had no other Objection against it, but some difficulties in Chronology; when, says he, innumerable Persons have endeavour'd to rectifie the Chronological Canons, but could never be able to this day to reconcile the differing Opinions. And ^b he observes in another place, how difficult it is to adjust the Accounts of Time, especially of the *Olympiads*, the Tables whereof are reported to have been taken by *Hippias*, upon no good Authority. The uncertainty of Chronology is a general complaint made by the best Historians, and therefore if this Objection have any weight, it must invalidate the Authority of all History.

A very learned and accurate Author has shewn the uncertainty in Chronology ^c during the first Monarchy, both in respect of Kingdoms, viz. the Kingdom of *Assyria* it self, and the Kingdoms contemporary with it, and of Persons and Occurrences. But doth this prove that there never were any such Kingdoms, nor any such Persons and Occurrences? ^d *Dion Chrysostomus* has an Oration to prove, that *Troy* was never taken. And there have been no fewer than ^e sixteen different Opinions concerning the time when *Homer* lived; the first of which, places him in the time of the destruction of *Troy*; the last, Five hundred Years after it. Was there never therefore any such Poet, but were

^a Plut. in *Solon*.

^b In *Numâ*.

^c Mr. Milner's *Defence of A. Bishop Usher*.

^d Orat. xi.

^e *Ruald. in Plut. Animadv. ult.*

the Books under his Name made by chance, not only without Truth, but without Design, by the lucky meeting together of Letters and Words? It is uncertain when the City of *Rome* was first built; for ^f *Salust*, and others, contrary to the common Opinion, that it was founded by *Romulus*, have ascribed the Foundation of it to the *Trojans*. And ^g those who make *Romulus* the Founder, yet are at a strange disagreement concerning the Parents of *Romulus*, and the time of his Birth. Some ^h have called his Mother's Name *Ilia*, some *Rhea*, some *Silvia*; others, as *Livy*, *Rhea Silvia*; yet still there is a farther difference about the time of the Foundation of the City, which has occasioned great Disputes among Chronologers. What then must follow from hence? Why, if the uncertainty of the time when any Fact was done, imply the uncertainty of the Fact it self, we must fairly conclude, that it is uncertain whether *Rome* was ever built at all, or at least, we must, with ⁱ *Temporarius* believe, that there never was any such Man as *Romulus*. The Copies of *Diogenes Laërtius* place the time of *Epicurus's* Death nine Years before he was born, as ^k *Menagius* has observed; but the Enemies of Religion have too great a value for *Epicurus*, to give him up for that reason, and to conclude that there never was such a Man. But it is yet more strange, that the time of so late and so remarkable a thing as the taking of *Constantinople* by the *Turks*, should be placed by some a Year sooner than by others. This was an Action known and discoursed of throughout all *Europe*, and is a pregnant instance, how little Reason there is to dispute the Certainty of a thing from any Uncertainty of Time, if other Circumstances concur

^f *Salust. Bell. Catalin. Dionys. Halicar. l. 1.*

^g *Plutarch. in Romulo.*

^h *Dionys. Halicar. ib.*

ⁱ *Temporat. Chron. Demonstr. lib. iii.*

^k *Menag. observ. in Diog. Laert.*

to assure us of the Truth of it. *The Chronologers are not a little ashamed, says¹ Mr. Gregory, that they should not be able to satisfy us, concerning so late and famous a Calamity, as the Siege of Constantinople by Mahumed the Second!*

II. The differences in Chronology do not imply, that there was any Chronological Mistake made by the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures, but they arise from the Mistakes of Transcribers or Expositors. To be convinced of this, we need only reflect a little upon some of those things, which are apt to cause Mistakes in the Computations of Chronology; and it will soon appear, how unreasonable it is to imagine, that no Book can be of Divine Inspiration, which is not fitted to secure Men from Errors, which it is natural for them to commit in things of that Intricacy.

1. Many difficulties in Chronology are occasion'd by not observing, that that which had been said before in the general, is afterwards resum'd and deliver'd in the Particulars contain'd under it. For the total Sum of any Term of Years being set down first, before the Particulars have been insisted upon and explain'd, has led some into Mistakes, by supposing, that the Particulars afterwards mention'd were not to be comprehended in it, but to be reckon'd apart, as if they had happen'd afterwards in order of Time, because they are last related in the course of the History. Thus *Gen. xi. 26.* it is said that *Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram*; and *ver. 32.* that *the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.* But *Gen. xii. 4.* it is written that *Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran*: which is inconsistent, if we suppose that *Abram* liv'd in *Haran* till the Death of his Father *Terah*: but if we consider that the whole number of Years which *Terah* liv'd, is set down *Gen. xi. 32.* and that the De-

¹ Jo. Greg. de *Aris & Epochis*, c. iii.

parture of *Abram* out of *Haran*, which is related *Gen.* xii. yet happen'd before his Father's Death, there will be no Inconsistency; but it will be evident, if *Terah* was but seventy Years old when *Abram* was begotten, and *Abram* was but seventy five Years old when he went out of *Haran*, that *Abram* left his Father *Terah* in *Haran*, where he liv'd after *Abram*'s departure from him to the Age of two hundred and five Years. Though during his Father's Life, he did upon occasion return to *Haran*. For the final Removal of *Abram* was not till the Death of his Father, as we learn from *Acts* vii. 4. And if this way of relating that in General first, which is afterwards set forth in the Particulars, be attended to in the Interpretation of the Scriptures, it will afford a Solution of many Difficulties, as ^m *St. Austin* has observ'd, which otherwise are inexplicable. Others suppose *Abram* was the youngest of *Terah*'s Sons, though mention'd first, and then there is no Difficulty in the Chronology; only by this and other * Instances we may observe that the eldest Brother is not always placed first in Scripture, but sometimes the youngest, out of respect to him, for his Favour with God, and his greater Dignity and Worth: and therefore whatever Difficulties in Chronology arise upon this Supposition, that the Son first named must therefore necessarily be first born, proceed from a Mistake.

2. Sometimes the principal number is set down, and the odd or lesser number is omitted, which being added to the great or principal number in some other place, causes a difference not to be reconciled, but by considering that it is customary in the best Authors not always to mention the lesser numbers, where the matter doth not require it. And we have evident Proof of this in the Scriptures. The time of the so-

^m Aug. Qu. Sup. *Genes.* c. 25.

* *Jos.* xxiv. 4. *1 Chron.* i. 28.

journing of the Children of *Israel* in the Land of *Canaan*, and of their dwelling in *Ægypt* is said to be the space of four hundred Years, *Gen.* xv. 13. *Act.* vii. 6. which yet was in all four hundred and thirty Years, *Exod.* xii. 40. *Gal.* iii. 17. *Joseph's* Brethren say, *We be twelve Brethren, and one is not*, *Gen.* xlii. 13, 32. The *Israelites*, who came out of *Ægypt*, are computed to be six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty, *Num.* i. 46. ii. 32. but *Moses* speaking of them, *Num.* xi. 21. leaves out the three thousand and five hundred and fifty. *Jerubbaal* or *Gideon* is said to have had threescore and ten Sons by his Wives, besides *Abimelech*, whom he had by a Concubine, *Judg.* viii. 30, 31. and *Abimelech* is often said to have slain these threescore and ten Brethren, though *Jotham* the youngest of them is at the same time said to have escaped, *Judg.* ix. 5, 18, 24, 56. The *Benjamites* that were slain, *Judg.* xx. 35. are said to be twenty and five thousand and an hundred men, whereas ver. 46. they are reckon'd only twenty and five thousand Men. *1 Cor.* xv. 5. we read that our Saviour was seen of *Cephas*, then of the twelve, though *St. Matthias* was not chosen into the number of the Apostles till after the Ascension of *Christ*, and *St. Mark* says precisely that he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, *Mark* xvi. 14. tho' *St. Thomas* was absent. Thus in Heathen Authors the *Trojan*ⁿ Fleet is said to consist of a thousand Ships, whereas *Homer* makes them two hundred more, as^o *Thucydides* reckons them, or one hundred sixty five by his Scholiast's counting, but the Historian did not care to be so punctual. Nay sometimes the lesser number by a gradual encrease, has equall'd or exceeded that, which still gave the denomination. An^p hundred

ⁿ Si, inquam, numerus non est ad amussim; ut non est, cum cimus mille naves iisse ad Trojam, centumvirale esse judicium *Rom.* Varro de Re Rust. l. i. c. 1.

^o Thucyd. l. i. c. 10.

^p Centuriam nunc dicimus (ut idem Varro ait) ducentorum

Acres of Land was by the Romans call'd *Centuria*; but in process of time the same Name was given to double that Number of Acres. The *Tribes* had that Denomination, because they at first were but Three; but still kept that Name, though they were ⁹ Thirty five. The Judges styled *Centumviri*, were at first five more than an hundred, and afterwards ^r almost twice that number, yet still they retain'd the same Name; as the LXXII. Interpreters are commonly styled the *Septuagint*. The † Persons, to whose Custody the *Sibylline* Oracles were committed, were at first Two, then Ten, afterwards Fifteen, at last Forty; yet still retain'd the Name *Quindecimviri*. Since therefore it is manifest, that the lesser Numbers are sometimes omitted both in the Old and New Testament, as well as in other Authors, and the principal and great numbers, whether more or less than the precise Calculation, are only set down, and at other times the lesser Numbers are specified; Nay, that sometimes the Original Number multiplied retains the first Denomination; It is reasonable to make Abatements, and not to insist rigorously always on precise Numbers, for this, in adjusting the accounts of Chronology.

3. Sometimes an *Epocha* may be mistaken by Chronologers: as *Gen. vi. 3.* And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man: for that he also is flesh, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty Years. But from *Gen. v. 32.* compared with *Gen. viii. 13.* the Flood must happen but an hundred Years after these Words seem to have been spoken: though if we com-

um modum; olim autem ab centum jugeribus vocabatur Centuria; sed mox duplicata nomen retinuit: sicuti Tribus dicta primum à patribus populi tripartito divisi, quæ tamen nunc multiplicata pristinum nomen possident. Columell. lib. v. c. 1.

⁹ Cic. in *Rul. um*.

^r Plin. l. vi. Epist. 33.

† Sane sciendum est primò Duos Librorum (*Sybill.*) fuisse Custodes, inde Decem, inde Quindecim usque ad tempora Syllana; post crevit numerus: nam Quadraginta fuerunt, sed remansit Quindecim virorum vocabulum. Serv. ad *Æneid. vi. v. 73.*

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pute not from the time, when this was threatned; but from the beginning of Man's Apostasy, which we may suppose then to have been already twenty Years, there will be no Difficulty in it. Or else the Threatning, though placed after it, might be denounced twenty Years before the five hundredth Year of *Noah's* Age, which falls under the Observation above-mention'd of *St. Austin*. [†] *St. Jerom* indeed says, that the time allow'd Mankind for Repentance was shortned for their Contumacy; and the Flood was brought upon the World twenty Years sooner than was design'd, if their Provocations had not hasten'd it.

4. Variations in Chronology may sometimes proceed from the Likeness of two Words, which occasion'd the writing the one for the other. Thus *Act* xiii. 20. some read, *ὡς ἔτεσι τε τετρακοσίοις*, not *ἔτεσι τετρακοσίοις*. Some famous Copies, from whence most others now remaining may have been transcribed, might happen to be uncorrect in some of these less material parts of Scripture: the Numeral Letters were easily mistaken, as we see our Figures now are; and when they number'd by Letters, Mistakes might the oftner happen, because the Transcribers might unawares write down a Letter of the foregoing or following Word, instead of the true Numeral Letter, when there was any Likeness between them; and the *Hebrew* Letters being some of them so very much alike, might be a readier occasion of Mistake. There is little reason to doubt, that from the likeness of the Numeral Letters, or of the *Hebrew* Words (which with little Alteration may resemble each other) in the Account of *Sampson's* Riddle, *Judg.* xiv. 15. *Seventh* Day was mistaken for *fourth* Day, as the coherence of Sense, and the Authority of the *Greek* and *Syriack* and *Arabic* Versions seem sufficiently to convince. This change

[†] Hieron. Qu. in Genes.

of Numeral Letters some think to have occasion'd the Difficulty concerning the Age of ^r *Abaziah*, Son of *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, when he began to reign, 2 *Kings* viii. 26. 2 *Chron.* xxii. 2. And that such Mistakes have been made in transcribing the Septuagint, is evident, because the several Copies of that Version have different accounts of Chronology, and they also differ from the Copies made use of by *Africanus* and *Eusebius*. Mistakes of this kind are very ^u common in all Greek and Latin Authors; and to prevent this Inconveniency, Mr. *Greaves* acquaints us, that the Emperor *Ulug Beg*, Nephew to *Tamerlane* the Great, ^x in his Astronomical Tables (the most accurate of any in the East) has express'd the Numbers of the principal Epochs, first in Words at length, and again in Figures, and then a third time in particular Tables: whose Example this excellent Author alledgeth for his own Exactness in describing the Dimensions of the Pyramids after the same manner; supposing it very improbable, if any one of these Accounts should happen to be alter'd, that two of them should not agree, and that those two which agree, shall not express the true Number.

5. In some places, the Alterations which cause the differences in the Chronology of the Septuagint from that of the Hebrew Text, are so uniform, that they could not be made but by design of some Transcribers, or of the Translators themselves. For instance,

^r 29. bearing the like Resemblance to 40. γ. 3. does to μ. 40. which occasion'd the mistake of three days in the Septuagint, for forty in the Hebrew. Joh. iii. 4.

^u Error fortasse ex notis ortus—nusquam non isto modo in bonis utriusque Linguae Scriptoribus est peccatum. Casaub. ad Theoph. Charact. Proem. Sed non dubito Librariorum potius negligentia, praesertim tot jam seculis intercedentibus veritatem fuisse corruptam, quam ut Propheta erraverit. Sicut in hoc ipso nostro opusculo futurum credimus, ut describentium incuria, qua non incurie à nobis sunt digesta, vitientur. Sulpic. Sever. Histor. Sacr. lib. i. cap. 70.

^x Greaves Pyramidogr.

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in the Lives of the five first Patriarchs, and of *Enoch* the seventh, they add an hundred Years before their having Children, and deduct the same number of Years from the time they liv'd afterwards: which is y conjectur'd to have been done, because they suppos'd that by Years there, are to be understood Lunar Years, or Months, and so they alter'd the Chronological account of their Lives. For if those be the Years meant by the *Hebrew* account, they must have been Fathers of Children at 5, 6, 7, or 8 Years of Age. This indeed is a very absurd Supposition, not only for the Reason now mention'd, and because *Methuselah* himself, by this account, would not have liv'd much more than Fourscore Solar Years, but because *Moses* in his Relation of the Flood, and upon other occasions expressly divides the Year into Months. But another Conjecture is, that it might be supposed, that as Mens Lives were longer then, so the Age at which they were capable of Marriage, must not be the same that it is now, but must bear proportion to the length of their Lives; and therefore they altered the Chronology, to make the Patriarchs Fathers of Children at such an Age, as might answer to the Age at which Men are capable of having Children in these latter Times. But according to the *Septuagint*, *Methuselah* out-lived the Flood fifteen Years, which contradicts the History of the Flood, as it is related in that Version: This probably could not happen but by some Alteration afterwards made; for tho' it was thus in ^z *Eusebius's* time in the Books, which were every where in common use, yet it was not in all Copies. However, this shews that the Variations in the *Septuagint*, can with no reason be alledged against the Authority of the *Hebrew* Account.

The mention of *Cainan*, the Son of *Arphaxad*, both in the Version of the *Septuagint*, and in the Gospel

^y Vid. Lud. Capell. Chron. Sacr.

^z Euseb. Chron.

of St. Luke, tho' it be not in the *Hebrew*, is a matter of greater difficulty. But Bishop ^a *Walton* notwithstanding, saw sufficient reason to conclude however, with such caution and candor as became so great a Judgment, that the *Septuagint* followed the *Hebrew* Copies of those Times: and the Answers to the Arguments brought to prove the contrary, have since been considerably enforced by the Learned ⁱ *Isaac Vossius*.

There is reason to believe, that the *Hebrew* and the *Samaritan* Account were the same in ^c St. *Jerom's* time, and that the difference between them has happened since.

6. The Son often reigning with the Father, his Reign is sometimes put down as commencing from his Partnership with his Father in the Kingdom, and in other places, from his reigning alone after his Father's Decease. Thus the difficulties are explained concerning the beginning of the Reigns of ^d *Jehoram* King of *Israel*, Son of *Ahab*, and *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, Son of *Jehosaphat*, 2 Kings i. 17. iii. 1. For it is said expressly, that *Jehosaphat* being then King of *Judah*, *Jehoram* the Son of *Jehosaphat*, King of *Judah*, began to reign, 2 Kings viii. 16. It is likewise manifest, that *Jehoash*, the Son of *Jehoahaz*, King of *Israel*, must reign with his Father three Years, 2 Kings xiii. 1, 10. This

^a Prologom. ix. §. 64, &c.

^b Castigat. ad Script. Georg. Horn. c. 4.

^c Siquidem & in *Hebrais* & *Samaritanorum* libris ita scriptum reperi. Et vixit *Mathusala*, &c. Hieron. Quest. in Gen. Vid. & Capell. Chron. Sacr.

^d Quod commodius explicari non potest, quam illa admissa Hypothesi, quæ eodem illo Anno 17. *Jehosaphati*, *Jehoramum* ejus filium *Judæ* Proregem constitutum fuisse, ejusque vicaria potestatis Anno 2. (*Jehosaphati* patris desinente 18.) mortuo fratri *Achazie* successisse in Regno *Israelitico* *Jehoramum* alterum, ex Prorege jam Regem factum. Cujus deinde ita regnantis Anno 5. *Jehoramum* quoque *Judæ* Proregem à vivente Patre *Jehosaphato*, jam seniore, Regni factum fuisse consortem, & quasi ex *Cæsare* creatum Augmentum. Usser. Chron. Sacr. p. 7.

is also applyed in the explication of other Questions by ^e St. Jerom. The Reign of *Azariah* is computed from his taking the Government upon himself at sixteen Years of Age, in the 27th Year of *Jeroboam* King of *Israel*; for then he is said to begin to reign, *2 Kings* xv. 1. whereas his Father *Amaziah* lived but to the fifteenth Year of *Jeroboam's* Reign, *2 Kings* xiv. 17. In the Kingdom of *Israel*, there was a long *Interregnum* between *Jeroboam* the Second and *Zachariah*, *2 Kings* xiv. 23. xv. 8. Some assign a threefold Computation of the Years of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Reign, the first from his laying Siege to *Jerusalem*, the second from his taking it, and the beginning of the Captivity, the third from his entire Monarchy after the Conquest of *Ægypt*. Others assign two beginnings of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Reign, the one from his coming with his Army into *Syria*, during the Life of his Father, the other from his Father's Death.

7. The Terms of Time in Computation, are sometimes taken inclusively, and at other times exclusively, *Matth.* xvii. 1. we read, *After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his Brother, and bringeth them up into an high Mountain apart*; and in like manner, *Mark* ix. 2. But this is said, *Luke* ix. 28. *to come to pass about an eight days after*; which is very consistent with what the other Evangelists write. For St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* speak exclusively reckoning the six Days between the time of our Saviour's Discourse, which they there relate, and his Transfiguration; but St. *Luke* includes the Day in which he had that discourse with his Disciples, and the Day of his Transfiguration, and reckons them with the six intermediate Days. The ^f *Rabbins* also observe, that the very first Day of a Year may stand in computation for that Year: and by this way of reckoning, mistakes of Years current for Years compleat, or Years compleat

^e Hieron. ad Vital.

^f Light. *Harm of the N. Test.* §. ix. for

for 8 Years current, in the successions of so many Kings, and the Transactions of Affairs for so long a time, may amount to a considerable number of Years. For this reason ^h *Thucydides* says, he computes the Years of the *Peloponnesian* War, not by the Magistrates yearly chosen during that time, but by so many Summers and Winters: Whereas ⁱ *Polybius*, *Josephus*, and *Plutarch*, have been thought to contradict themselves, because they sometimes reckon by *current*, and sometimes by *complete* Years.

These, and several other ways, by which Disputes in Chronology may be occasioned, are a sufficient Argument to us, that they do not imply, that there were originally Chronological Mistakes in the Books themselves: And if they might so many ways arise without any Error in the Original Writings; if the same Difficulties occur upon so very nice and intricate a Subject in all Books in the World, and it could be by no means necessary, that Books of Divine Authority should be either at first so penned, as to be liable to no wrong Interpretations, or be ever after preserved by Miracle from all Corruption, it is great rashness to deny the Divine Authority of the Scriptures upon the account of any Difficulties in Chronology.

8 Ἡμεῖς τὸ ἀκριβοῦς ἵσως ἀνοσμήν ἀπάντων τῶν ἐτῶν τῶν ἀριθμῶν, διὰ
μὴ ἀναστρέφειν ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις τὰς ἐπιτέχοντες μύθους, καὶ
ἀκριβοῦς. Theoph. ad Autolych. l. 3.

^h Thucyd. lib. v. c. 20.

ⁱ Ruald. in Plut. Animadv. 45.

C H A P. VII.

*Of the Obscurity of some Places in the Scriptures.
particularly of the Types and Prophecies.*

Here it must in the first place be remembred, that it has been a common and true Observation, that all Authors are rather perplex'd and obscured, than explained by a multitude of Commentators; and this is so true of no Book as of the Scriptures: for as none has had so many Glosses and Comments put upon it by Men of all Ages and Nations, so most of them endeavour to find out some new Explication, or to serve a Cause, and maintain some particular Opinions by their Expositions. So that it is a wonder that any part of the Scriptures should be clear, after Volumes have been written, I may truly say, upon every Text, rather than that Difficulties should be found in them. But at the same time it must be acknowledged, that we find it declared in the Scriptures themselves, that there are places of difficulty in them: which makes it but so much the more unreasonable, that this should be urged as an Objection against them. For what is acknowledged and profess'd, must be suppos'd to be with a design, and for some good reason; and the reason and design ought to be inquired into, before this be used as an Objection. St. Peter speaking of Christ's coming to Judgment, says, that St. Paul in his Epistles had delivered *some things hard to be understood*; and St. Paul himself intimates, that there had been mistakes concerning what he had written in this matter, 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2, 3. St. Peter on this occasion says, that it so happened not only to St. Paul's Epistles, but to other Books of the Scriptures, thro' the ignorance and rashness of *unlearned and unstable Men*, that they were *wrested by them to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16.

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And it happens more especially in those places of Scripture, which are concerning things of this nature, or contain whatever Prophecies of things to come. Therefore I shall, I. give an account how it comes to pass, that there are things hard to be understood in the Scriptures in general. II. I shall in particular consider the obscurity of Prophecies, and shall prove the certainty of the Types made use of by the Prophets, and shew that there is great force and evidence in the Arguments brought from them. III. I shall prove that the obscurity of some places of the Scriptures is no prejudice to the Authority of them, nor to the end and design of them.

I. I shall give an account in general, how it comes to pass, that there are some things in the Scriptures hard to be understood.

I. Some Doctrines, which it mightily concerns us to be acquainted withal, could not be delivered in so plain a manner, but that they must needs have great difficulties in them; as the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, of the Incarnation of Christ, of the Resurrection, and of the Joys of Heaven and of the Torments of Hell. There are several things which we are capable of knowing, and which are necessary to be known, of which yet we cannot have so perfect and absolute a knowledge, but that something of them will still remain unknown to us. As there is no Object more visible, or better known to us than the Sun is; but to calculate the dimensions and the distance of the Sun from us, to know how its Light is communicated, and suddenly spread over the Face of the Earth, are things of great difficulty, and can never perhaps be fully accounted for: In like manner, what the Scriptures deliver to us concerning the Nature of God, and the state of the World to come, must needs have difficulties in it, tho' we are never so well assured that there is a God, and a Future State, because these are things above our Understandings: we may

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perfectly understand that there are such things, but can have no full and clear conception of all that may be fit to be delivered to us concerning them. Nothing can be made plainer to us, than we are capable of knowing it, or than the Nature of it, and the proportion our Faculties bear to it, will allow. God being incomprehensible, whatever is delivered concerning him, can never be without all difficulty; and whilst we are in this World, we can never understand the state of the next so fully, as we shall do hereafter. These are difficulties which must be, unless the Nature of the things, or our own Nature were different from what it is.

Nevertheless, the greatest Mysteries in the Christian Religion, so far as they are revealed, and so far as they are required to be known by us, contain no inexplicable difficulties: but if we will needs know more of the Mysteries of Religion than is revealed, and more than is required to be known, no wonder if we meet with difficulties. What is meant, for instance, by the Doctrine of the Trinity, is capable of being very well understood, as the opposers of this Doctrine must own, unless they will confess, that they oppose they know not what. He that says a thing is not true, understands what it is which he pretends not to be true, if he knows what he says. The thing then is known, tho' there be difficulties in the explication; but the explication concerns the manner of existence, not the truth of it. For that may certainly be, and we may certainly know it to be, which yet we know not how it should be. And the Doctrine it self only is revealed, as necessary to be believed, not any particular explication of it. If it can be proved, that this is the Doctrine of Scripture, and it be plain to be understood what is meant by this Doctrine, as it is delivered in Scripture, this shews the plainness of the Christian Religion in all things necessary to Salvation, tho' divers things relating to this

this Doctrine be difficult to be explained, because the Doctrine is intelligibly and plainly enough delivered, so far as it is required to be understood and believed.

Several Arts and Sciences, which are very difficult and abstruse in the Theory, are easie in the Practice, and a Man may very well understand what the *Theorem* it self is, which is to be proved, tho' he be altogether incapable of understanding the proof of it. Now, what God says, is as certain as any demonstration can be, and what he has plainly delivered, is plain as well as certain; and it is never the less certain or plain, because we cannot make out the proof of it, nor are able to understand how it can be. It is sufficient that the Scriptures are plain in this Doctrine, so far as we are concerned to know it; it is not necessary that the Doctrine it self should be plain in all the Controversies, which may be raised about it: when we know the meaning, we must take God's Word for the Truth of it. The manner of the distinction of Persons, and the Unity of Essence in the Godhead, is not required to be believed, but the Thing; and we know the Thing to be so, because God himself has said it, tho' we can know nothing of the manner of it. We know the Proposition, which is to be believed, tho' we cannot make good the Proof of it in the way of natural Reasoning, but only from the Authority of the Revealer, which is of it self sufficient, and ought to be instead of all other Reasons to us.

2. Some parts of the Scriptures were fitted and accommodated to former Ages, and were more proper and useful for them, than if they had been written in such a manner, as to be less obscure and difficult. We may well imagin, that many parts of the Scriptures must have been more peculiarly adapted to their use and advantage, for whom they were immediately designed: and the Learning and Wisdom of ancient Times consisted in Parables and Proverbs and obscure

Forms of Speech, in *Prophecies*, in *Subtil* and *Dark Parables*, and in the *secrets of grave Sentences*, Eccl. xxxix. 1, 2, 3. And it was foretold of the *Messias* in particular, that he should speak in Parables, as a matter of great excellency. *I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark Sayings of old*, Psal. lxxviii. 2. Matt. xiii. 35. This was in ancient Times the Language of Courts, and the properest way of Address to Kings. *Nathan* the Prophet, and the Woman of *Te-koa*, came to *David* with a Parable, 2 Sam. xii. 1. xiv. 4. And *Jehoash*, King of *Israel*, sent a Message of the same nature to *Amaziah*, King of *Judah*, 2 Kings xiv. 9. and ^a *Cyrus* answers the Petition of two Nations at once to him, in a short Parable. *To understand a Proverb, and the Interpretation, the Words of the Wise, and their dark Sayings*, was the best description that *Solomon* himself could give of Wisdom, Prov. i. 6. The Queen of *Sheba* came to prove him with hard Questions, 1 Kings x. i. And ^b *Solomon* and *Hiram* are related by *Josephus*, to have propounded Problems and Riddles, or Parables to each other, upon condition of a Forfeiture to be paid by him, who could not explain the Riddle sent him. This would be looked upon now as a strange correspondence between Kings; but then it was otherwise thought of; many of their Epistles were preserv'd, as he tells us, to his time at *Tyre*; and the Heathen Historians, whose Testimonies he produceth, thought it deserv'd their particular Observation. This was that ^c *Prize of Wisdom* between *Amasis* King of *Ægypt*, and the King of *Æthiopia*, and it was customary among the ancient *Greeks*. This Custom of propounding Riddles was as old as *Sampson's* time, Judg. xiv. 12. and Examples of the

^a Herodot. lib. i. c. 141.

^b Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. & Contr. Apion. lib. i.

^c *Ἀμύλλα Σοφίας*. Plut. Conviv. Sapient.

same nature are to be seen in *Herodotus* ^d and other Authors. Whether it be true or false that *Homer* died of Grief, because he could not explain the Riddle of the Fishers, it shews that Riddles were in great request among the Ancient *Greeks*: for otherwise there could have been no ground either for the Truth or Fiction of such a Story. *Plutarch* relates it, as the true Cause of *Homer's* Death; and ^e no less is imply'd in the Oracle, which was written under *Homer's* Statue in Brass at *Delphi*: and when ^f *Herodotus* denies this, he owns the Report; and by the Verses, which he says *Homer* spoke upon this occasion, it appears what opinion *Homer* had of this sort of Wit. *Hesiod* is by ^g *Quintilian* thought the Author of the Fables, which pass under the Name of *Æsop*; however, this makes it probable that he did write Fables, and perhaps there were few Men of Learning and Note in those times, who did not.

Mythology was in the highest esteem amongst the Ancients, and indeed all the Ancient Learning was of this kind. The *Ægyptians*, who were in great Reputation for Learning, deliver'd their Notions in Hieroglyphicks, as if they had resolv'd not to be understood. And the Philosophers of old, *Pythagoras*, *Heraclitus*, &c. greatly affected Obscurity. *Socrates* himself, and *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, purposely conceal'd their Meaning in many cases from vulgar Capacities: and *Thucydides* took the same course in his History, and was obscure out of design, as *Marcellinus* has observ'd in his Life. The Books of the Old Testament for the most part seem to have been the most plain, and the most easily intelligible, of any Writings of ancient times; and they could not have been more obvious,

^d Vid. *Athenæ*. l. x. c. 15, &c.

^e *Pausan.* Phocic. — ἄλλα νέων παίδων ἀνίγμια φύλαξαι.

^f *Herod. & Plut.* in Vit. *Homeri*.

^g *Quintil. Institut.* lib. v.

but they must have been contemptible and useless to those for whom they were immediately design'd. The Precepts and Exhortations are always plain and obvious, and the Obscurity of other things is so far from being an Exception to the Books of Scripture, that it was necessary, according to the Learning and Customs of ancient times.

The Parables of our Blessed Saviour are explain'd to us, and there can now be no Pretence of Obscurity in them; and in his Discourses with the *Jews*, to whom they were not explain'd, he alluded to those Proverbs and Customs, which were best known and most in use among them, to whom upon any occasion he spoke; that thereby all, who *had ears to hear*, and were not by their Sins hinder'd from attending to what they heard, might be the more affected with them, and the better inclined to give themselves up to his Instructions, when they heard him make use of such Allusions, as they knew, according to the way of teaching amongst them, had some excellent hidden Meaning, which they would be very desirous to become acquainted withal. His first instructions were deliver'd in plain and easie terms. But when the *Jews* shut their Eyes against the Light, he was compelled, as a Learned Author † has observed, to betake himself to Parables. A Method in the East, used to this day in like Cases.

3. Many places of Scripture, which are obscure to as, were not obscure in the Ages in which they were written.

(1.) Because the Obscurity for the most part is rather in the form and manner of Speech, than in

† *Orientalibus Populis vel hodierno hocce die in more positum est, ut quoties controversia simplici modo decidi nequit, Parabola aliqua adhibeatur, ut variarum rerum imaginibus dissidentes animi persuadeantur.* Surenhus. de Coneil. loc. v. & N. Test. p. 243.

the Notions themselves; so that that might be clear at first, which is obscure to us, who are but little acquainted with the Phrases and Idioms of the Language, and the Eloquence of those Times and Countries. For the Fashions of Speech vary as much as those of the Garb and Habit, and the Eloquence and ways of Expression are as different, as the Dialects and Languages of divers Ages and Nations. Sometimes the Sense depends upon a *Paronomasia*, and therefore cannot be so well express'd in a Translation. *The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah what seest thou? And I said, I see a Rod of an Almond-tree. Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it, Jer. i. 11, 12.* * The Hebrew word signifying an *Almond-tree*, is derived from a word signifying to *hasten*. † Because the Almond-tree is observed to be the first in Flower of any Tree, and to have the first ripe Fruit. So that this was a very significant Allusion, and very proper for the *Jews*, denoting, that God would speedily punish them with the *Rod* of his Judgments. But this is hardly to be express'd in a Translation; and the *vulgar Latin* instead of † expressing ** the Allusion, has injured the Sense.

(2.) The Names of Animals, of Flowers and Plants and Minerals are very liable to be mistaken, and especially whatever is peculiar to any Country, must needs be difficult to be understood by Foreigners, who have no such things among them, and perhaps want words to express their Nature, and can scarce have a true and

* Makal shaked, a rod of an Almond-tree. Ani shoked, I will hasten. † Ex his, quæ hieme, Aquilâ exoriente (ut diximus) concipiunt, sciret prima omnium Amygdala, mense Januario: Martio verò pomum maturat. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xvi. c. 25.

‡ Virgam vigilantem ego video. Et dixit Dominus ad me, vigilabo ego, super verbo meo, ut faciam illud.

** תפוש Observavit, advigilavit, festinus fuit, maturavit.

170 *The Reasonableness and Certainty*

exact Notion of them. Synonymous Names of things may easily be mistaken for different Species: In the Book of *Job*, five several Words are used, to signify a Lion, in two Verses, *Job* iv. 10, 11. and in three other Verses, Gold is mention'd under four distinct Names, *Job* xxviii. 15, 16, 17. And if all these Words did not occur in other places of Scripture, they might have been taken for five kinds of Animals, and four sorts of Metals; which must sometimes happen in a Language, of which there is so little extant, as of the *Hebrew* Tongue. The precise Value of Coins, and Proportion of Weights and Measures, used so long ago, and in Countries so far from ours, can hardly now be known, and must necessarily admit of great Variety of Opinions: there is much Uncertainty about these in all ancient History, but the great Antiquity of the *Jewish* History, above others, may make us reasonably expect to find many more such difficulties in it. It is Rashness to pretend, that the Sum, which *David* left for the Building the Temple, is extravagant, (*1 Chron.* xxii. 14.) since no Man can now be certain of the Value or Weight of a Talent of Gold and of Silver, in *David's* time. For the Weight and Valuation of Coins has, in different Ages, vary'd in all Countries. We read of a Talent of Lead, *Zech.* v. 7. which is but a piece of Lead of an uncertain Weight or Value. And the same Word signifies a Piece or Loaf of Bread, *Exod.* xxix. 23. *Prov.* vi. 26. And the same Names of different Persons or † Places; or the different Names* of the same Persons, and of the same Places in the Scriptures, is another occasion of Obscurity. But thus it is in all Histories of ancient times. The Mother of *Alexander* is mention'd by Historians under different Names: ^h *Plu-*

† Vid. Maf. ad *Jos.* xv. 35. * Vid. Kimchi & R. Aben. Melech. Comment. in *1 Paral.* iv. & vi. apud Beckium: Not. in Paraph. Chald. *1. Paral.* iii. 24.

^h *Plut.* de *Pyth.* Orac.

tarch says, ſhe had three Names, and he obſerves in general, that divers Names of the ſame Perſons were the Cauſe of Confuſion in Hiſtory. The Names, Coins, Weights, and Measures, and Habits of ancient times, afford the greateſt Work for Criticks, which were ſo well known, when the Authors who mention them, wrote, that it had been ridiculous for them to explain them. Theſe are Difficulties of that nature, that they could not be avoided, but by the Care and Concernment of an extraordinary Providence, and they are of ſo little moment, that it could not be expected, that God ſhould particularly concern himſelf to prevent them.

(3.) The Penmen of the Scriptures, in their Proverbs or Parables, often allude to Cuſtoms, or to things, that happen'd in thoſe times, in which they liv'd, that were then commonly known, but being unknown now, may well make many places of their Writings obſcure to us, which were not ſo to thoſe of their own time. This is alledg'd as the Reaſon of the Obſcurityⁱ of the Laws of the Twelve Tables among the *Romans*, at the diſtance of leſs than ſeven hundred Years after their firſt being enacted. And the^k Ancient Interpreters long before confeſs'd their Ignorance in ſome parts of them, tho' the *Romans* made their Children learn theſe Laws by heart. But thus it is in all Books of Antiquity, eſpecially in ſuch Books as have frequent occaſion to hint at things ſo notorious, at the time when they were written, that it was needleſs to give any particular account of them. This has made Notes and Comments neceſſary upon all Ancient Books, and thoſe places need them moſt,

ⁱ *Obscuritates, inquit Sex. Caelius, non assignemus culpa Scribentium, sed incitiae non assequuntur: quanquam hi quoque ipsi, qui quae scripta sunt, minus percipiunt, culpa vacant. Nam longa aetas verba atque mores veteres obliteravit, quibus verbis moribusque sententia legum comprehensa est.* A. Gell. l. xx. c. i.

^k *Cic. de Legib. l. ii.*

which

which treat of things formerly so well known, that the Authors did not think fit to insist upon them, but supposed them, and only alluded to them, rather than express'd or explain'd them. For which reason, we owe the Informations which we have of the *Roman* Antiquities chiefly to *Greek* Authors, because it had been absurd for *Romans*, writing to Men of their own City and Nation, to acquaint them with the Customs of *Rome*, which they knew as well as themselves; but those things were proper for Foreigners to take notice of, for the Information of Foreigners. ¹ *Pausanias* writing under *Adrian* thought it requisite to take notice, that the *Romans* were not denominated from their Fathers, after the manner of the *Greeks*, but each of them had at least three Names. So little known to Strangers were the most obvious *Roman* Customs, even in that Age. But that, which was commendable in him, would have been hardly pardonable in a *Latin* Writer. And much of the Knowledge relating to the Customs among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, is rather owing to Inscriptions, or to the Statues and other Figures and Monuments of Antiquity, than to any account given by ancient Authors. But the Jews being permitted to make no Images, we must be content to be ignorant of the things, which could be known to us only by these means. And whatever Allusions, either in Parables or otherwise, are made to such things, must needs be difficult to us, because whatever is thus spoken with reference to any thing, can be known no better than the thing it self; and that which serv'd for an Illustration at the first Writing, renders the Sense obscure, when the thing used for Illustration, becomes unknown. Nothing is more generally known than the Proverbial Sayings of a Nation, to the People of it; but there is nothing that needs more Explication to Foreigners. And these Sayings are very frequent both

¹ *Pausan. Achaic. p. 213.*

in the Discourses of our Saviour, and throughout the whole Scriptures: for they are the most significant and instructive way of Discourse, and the most easily apprehended by such as are used to them. The use of Proverbs is natural to all Nations, and they are the Result of the Experience and Observation of any People: So that the most effectual and readiest way of Instruction is to apply these Sayings generally known and receiv'd, to particular cases and occasions. But then these commonly depend upon the Customs of a People, or upon some History, or particular Accident, and oftentimes are taken up at first upon small occasions, and the Intention and Signification of them is apt to be forgotten, or mistaken in future Ages, or by other Nations. And therefore all places of Scripture, express'd in Allegorical or Proverbial Forms of Speech, or by Types and Resemblances of things, must needs have been better understood in those times, when they were written, than they are now, because we have but an imperfect Notion of many things, to which the Allusion is made, or from whence the Similitude is taken, and the very thing which makes them now obscure to us, made them the more plain and intelligible to them, who liv'd at the time of their being written.

(4.) *Maimonides*^m lays this down as a fundamental Rule for the Explication of the Scripture, that we should attend to the main Scope and Design of Parables, and not insist upon every Word and Circumstance, which is added to make them more Natural, but not as any necessary part of them. And in those Ages, when Prophecies were so frequent, and Types and Allegories so constantly made use of, they had certain Rules and Methodsⁿ of Interpretation, as we learn from *Josephus*, which through length of time,

^m Maim. More Nevoch. Præf.

ⁿ Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. 14.

and the Corruption of succeeding Ages are now lost. And it is certain, that the *Jews* in the time of our Saviour and his Apostles were often confuted and silenced by them with the Application of Types and Prophecies, which were then acknowledg'd to belong to the *Messias*, and were ever so understood by the *Jews*, but would scarce be understood so by us, if we did not find them thus interpreted and apply'd.

We see then, that the Obscurity of many places of Scripture, proceeds from the length of time, and other Accidents, and that therefore it could not be prevented, unless God should make a New Revelation to every Age and Nation of the World: which yet would be of little effect to those, who will not be convinced nor persuaded by that Revelation which we have in the Scriptures. Though the Scriptures were design'd for the Benefit and Instruction of all Ages and Nations, yet they often had a more direct and immediate Regard to the Age and Nation, in which they were first penn'd. We have nothing left but the Names of most of the *Historians*, mention'd by *S. Jerom* as necessary to be read in order to explain the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and many Objections made against the Scriptures would have no Pretence, if we knew the Circumstances of Affairs, and had a complete History of those times, to which they relate; but God having given us full evidence, that the Scriptures are written by his Appointment and Direction, expects to be believed upon his word, and has not thought fit to gratifie the curiosity of Men, who will disbelieve it. And if Men will use any tolerable care and diligence, the Sense and Importance of the Scriptures may be so far understood as is needful, in all Times, whatever difficulties there may be in some particular Passages.

II. I shall consider more particularly the obscurity of Prophecies, and shall shew what certainty there is in the Types made use of by the Prophets.

I. As

I. As for any differences, which are to be met with in the Interpretation of Prophecies, they may proceed partly from the Infirmities and Passions of humane Nature, by which it comes to pass, that when Men undertake to write upon any Subject, they are seldom satisfied with what others have said before them, but are for seeking out some new Interpretation of their own: And partly from the difficulty of fixing the particular and precise time of Actions. But this is no more an Objection against Prophecies, than it is against the Truth of all History; and we may as well conclude, that things never came to pass, because learned Men differ about the time of their being done, as that they were never prophesied of, for the same reason. Expositors may differ in the niceties of the Chronological part, but in the main they are agreed, and whoever will be at the pains to consult them, may be greatly confirmed in the Truth of the Prophecies, upon this very consideration, that there is less difference in the explication of the principal Prophecies, than there is in the Comments upon most Histories; and that those who differ in other matters, must have the greater evidence for that in which they do agree. Tho' there be some difficulty and variety of Opinion in the calculation of the precise time, when some Prophecies were fulfilled, because it is disputed where the computation is to begin, or how some other circumstance is to be understood; yet all Expositors are agreed, concerning these very Prophecies, that they are fulfilled. For instance; it is certain, that the Scepter is departed from *Judah*, whether that Prophecy be to be understood of the Tribe of *Judah*, or the *Jewish* Nation denominated from that Tribe; it is certain, that the City and Sanctuary are destroyed, and the Sacrifice and Oblation taken away, tho' Interpreters do not agree about the precise time and manner of the accomplishment of every particular. Plain Matter of Fact shews, that
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the Prophecy is fulfilled, and there is no difficulty but about a Circumstance; and to doubt of the fulfilling of Prophecies, because we do not certainly know the exact time when every particular was fulfilled; tho' we certainly know that they must have been all long since fulfilled, is as reasonable as if a Man should question the Truth of History upon the account of Uncertainties in Chronology. What Man doubts whether there were such a Man as *Homer*, because it is uncertain when he lived? or, whether there ever were a *Trojan* War, because the time of the taking of *Troy* has been variously determined? And yet, is there not as much reason to reject this, or any other History, which has occasioned Disputes in point of Time, as there can be to doubt of the truth of *Daniel's* Predictions, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*, because there may be Matter of Controversie in explaining his *seventy Weeks*? The Prophecy it self is plain, and the Accomplishment certain, however Men may differ in assigning the Epocha of Time. History relates what has come to pass, and Prophecy foretels what shall come, and our uncertainty in point of Time no more affects the Credibility of the one than of the other. We may be uncertain of the time foretold by the Prophet, and as uncertain of the time mentioned by the Historian; but when all other Circumstances agree, there is no reason why our uncertainty, as to the single Circumstance of Time, should be alledged against the Credibility of either of them. But the Obscurity arising from the difficulties in Chronology, is spoken of in the former Chapter.

2. Some Prophecies were purposely obscure, because they did not so nearly concern the Age, in which they were delivered, but were designed not so much for the Information of preceding Ages, as for the Confirmation of Posterity in the Truth of Religion, when they should see them fulfilled. God doth not send
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Revelations to gratifie the curiosity of Men, in acquainting them with what shall befall their Posterity, but rather conceals the knowledge of future Events from Men, because the knowledge of them might have an ill effect, in making them proud, or careless and negligent; or else too solicitous and concerned about what was to befall their Posterity. The Judgments and Afflictions of Parents would be so much abated, if they had a clear prospect of the Happiness of their Posterity, that they would lose that effect, which God designs by sending his Judgments. And a perfect view of the Miseries, which were to befall the Posterity of the most happy Parents, would render the Blessings of God the less Blessings to them. So that both the Rewards and Punishments of this Life would very much lose their force and effect, if Prophecies were less obscure than they are. It is a sufficient reason for the obscure and mysterious delivering of some Prophecies, that they thereby serve to prove the Faith and Patience, and excite the Care and Watchfulness of Men: for which reason, the Day of Judgment, and the Day of every Man's Death, is concealed from us, because the particular and distinct Revelation of these things, would cause Security in some, and Despair in others; and the case is the same as to the destruction of Churches and Nations: We are commanded to Watch and Pray, *Watch ye therefore, lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping; and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch,* Mark xiii. 35. Which in the direct sense of the words concerns *Jerusalem*, but the reason of them will extend to the destruction of any other City, or to any other Judgment which God has foretold, but has concealed the time, or other circumstances, either by silence, or by uncertain and mysterious Forms of Speech. A full prospect of Prosperity to come, oftentimes has proved fatal to Men: *Jeroboam, Hazael, and Jehu*, were the worse probably for the Declarations made to them; as *Achitophel*, if

it had been foretold plainly what would befall him, would, in all likelihood, sooner have hastened his own Death. Whether therefore the Event be good or bad, and whether it concern our selves or our Posterity, it is fit, most times, that it should not be clearly revealed to us, because this would, in great measure, exclude the exercise of the Graces of Faith, and Hope, and Patience in Men, under the present Condition. And at the time of fulfilling the Prophecies, which are now most obscure, such a continued Train and Series of Affairs, with all their Circumstances and Particularities, may appear in so full and undeniable Evidence, as may convince Infidels, and confirm Believers in the truth of the Predictions, and of the Religion taught by the Prophets, by whom the Events were foretold.

3. Obscurity was necessary in some Prophecies, as the ° Fathers observe, because, without a constant Miracle to preserve them, they would otherwise have been lost, and would never have been delivered down to Posterity. Of this Nature are some of those Prophecies, which relate to our Saviour's state of Humiliation, his Poverty, and Crucifixion, and Death, to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the rejection of the *Jews*, which, by the Circumstances, are manifest to us in the Accomplishment, but were written with some obscurity to conceal them from the obstinate and malicious *Jews*, that *seeing they might see and not perceive*: for if they had fully understood the scope and importance of them, they would have endeavoured rather to have suppressed and destroyed them, than they would have suffered them to remain to be urged against themselves: A People who were so wholly possessed with the Notion and Expectation of a Tem-

° Just. Mart. Dial. Irenæ. l. iii. c. 24. Euseb. Dem. Evang. l. vi. Proæm. Chrys. in Isai. vii. Theodoret. in Ezek. Præf.

poral *Messias*, would have rejected those Prophecies which set forth his Humiliation and Crucifixion, if they had been expressed in plainer terms. They would have spared Christ no more in the Prophecies of him than in his Person.

Again, Obscurity was necessary, because some Events could never have been brought to pass, if they had been expressly and in plain terms foretold, unless God would have forced Men to the Accomplishment of his Predictions, which must have taken away the Liberty of Human Actions. For Men would scarce have ventured upon such Actions, as they knew before-hand must end in Affliction and great Calamity, and perhaps in the ruin of themselves, or of their Families or Nation; and yet it may be necessary, that these things should come to pass, for the wise Ends of Providence, and for the Good and Salvation of Mankind. Few would have shewn that Courage and Resolution, which *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* did in preaching the Gospel, if they had been told so long before, as *St. Peter* was, that it must end in Martyrdom, or if the Holy Ghost had witnessed in every City concerning them, as he did of *St. Paul*, saying in express terms, that *Bonds and Afflictions did abide him*; most other Men would have been moved, tho' he was not, by any of these things, *Acts xx. 23*. For we find, that the Disciples, upon this account, were earnest with him not to go up to *Jerusalem*. So difficult is it for the best Men in the best cause, to resolve to meet certain and apparent Dangers. The nature therefore of some things requires, that they should not be more particularly described in the Prophecies concerning them. For either they must have been obscurely spoken of, or else they could not have been prophesied of at all; because, if they had been clearly foretold, they could never have come to pass; which implies a contradiction: for it is impossible, that what God declares by his Prophets should not be fulfilled.

filled. If all that was to befall the Church of Christ had been set down with the circumstances of Time, and Place, and Persons, by St. *John* in the *Revelation*, so as to prevent the Objections of those, who except against the obscurity of that Book, this certainly would have proved a great discouragement to many Christians in the performance of their Duty, and must have hindred the bringing to pass the Events, unless God should have over-ruled the Minds of Men, and forced them upon acting, which had been to deprive them of their Freedom of Will.

4. If Prophecies had punctually foretold the things to be fulfilled in all their Circumstances, Men would have purposely contrived to frame their Actions in such a manner, as to appear to fulfil many of them; and whenever they had been fulfilled, it might have been supposed to have been by design and contrivance. Which would have been only to act a part, or live by a Rule and Pattern described and set before them; but when the obscurity is such, that they become fulfilled without any intention or knowledge of the Person employed in fulfilling them, this manifests the Wisdom and Providence of God. If Prophecies had been less obscure, Men would have been the more prone, to venture upon the commission of Sin in order to fulfil them. We find by experience, how apt all Enthusiasts, and such as persuade themselves that they have a clear and perfect knowledge of the obscurest Prophecies, are, to think any thing lawful to be done, which may bring about those Events, that they fancy to be the Accomplishment of them. And if the Events of all Prophecies had been concealed under no obscurity of words and circumstances, but had been obvious and visible to every Reader, the number of such Undertakers would have been much greater: for it is a hard matter to make Men distinguish between the accomplishment of Prophecies, and the Sin which is often committed in the accomplishment of them;

them ; but when they can serve their Interest by it, they are willing to believe the worst Actions lawful, which may fulfil a Prophecy ; and the clearer Prophecies had been, the more occasion and pretence had been given to such delusions, to which none are now subject, but such as think them clear, and persuade themselves, or would persuade others, that they thoroughly understand them.

5. Another reason is, that sometimes a Prophecy may be delivered obscurely, in mercy to the Instruments, who are to bring about the Event foretold by it. For God foreseeing that some Men, notwithstanding the clearest Revelations, would persist in their Wickedness, and become instrumental in accomplishing the Prediction, may in mercy to them forbear to discover the particulars of the Event, lest this should add to their guilt, and prove a great aggravation both of their Crime and Punishment. Our Saviour, tho' *he knew from the beginning who it was that should betray him*, yet concealed it, till his last Supper, and then discovered it to *Judas* in the mildest manner, to move him to Repentance, if he had not hardened himself against it; not to make him desperate upon the discovery of so wicked a Design.

Again, other Prophecies may be hid in obscurity for a judgment upon those who are obstinate, and will not make a due use of the means afforded them of Salvation, but harden their Hearts, and resolve to continue impenitent against all the methods which God has been pleased to use to reclaim them. For of such our Saviour gives this reason, why he spoke to them in Parables, *that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them*, Mark iv. 12. For when God has both by Miracles and other Prophecies, unquestionably clear and plain, admonish'd and forewarn'd 'em of the folly and danger of their Ways, and they will take no

notice of it, but reject his Revelations, and affront his Mercy, it is very just for him to deny them that farther Declaration and Manifestation of his Will and Power, which might effectually produce a true Faith in 'em, and bring 'em to Repentance, especially when the obscurity of Prophecies may be conducing to the methods of his Providence, and to his gracious designs of Mercy towards other Men, who have not stood out in so bold a defiance of his other Declarations of himself. *God endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardneth :* and therefore the obscurity of Prophecies may be in mercy to some, to prevent the aggravation of their Sins, and for a judgment upon others to harden them.

6. *It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honour of Kings is to search out a matter,* Prov. xxv. 2. The obscurity of Prophecies may be designed to abate the confidence, and confound the pride of some, and to provoke the diligence and industry of others. For as some Men care to be at no pains to attain the most useful and necessary knowledge, so others despise all that is obvious, and have no satisfaction in the knowledge of such things, as are easily known by others as well as themselves. And this seems not only to have been the temper of those Ages, in which the Scriptures were written, when Learning consisted in Types and Parables, and in dark and intricate Discourses, but it has been the study and delight of learned Men in most Ages since, and of many Men in all Ages, to search into hidden and difficult Truths. ^P St. Jerom extols the Revelation of St. John for the Obscurity and hidden Sense of it; as ^q Dionysius, Bishop of

^P *Apocalypsis Joannis tot habet sacramenta, quot verba; parùm dixi pro merito voluminis, laus omnis inferior est, in verbis singulis multiplices latent intelligentie.* Hieron. ad Paulin. Epist.

^q *Καὶ ἐκ ἀποκριμάτων ταῦτα, ἃ μὴ συνήθιστα διαμαρτυροῦνται, ὅτι μὴ καὶ εἶδον.* Apud Euseb. Hist. l. vii. c. 25.

Alexandria, had done long before him. In those Ages, it seems, it was no Objection, but the highest Character that could be given of the *Revelation*, to say that it was difficult to be understood. The Wisdom of God therefore, in condescension to all sorts of Men, and to fit the Scriptures for the use and benefit of all Capacities and Dispositions, has caus'd some of the Prophecies to be plain and obvious to all Readers, and others to be so deliver'd as to employ the pious and humble Labours of the most Learned and Inquisitive, to keep them in perpetual Dependence upon God for his Grace and Assistance in the Explication of the Scriptures; and at the same time to take down the vain Curiosity and Pride of such, as little concern themselves about the plain things of the Law, but are wholly busied in unfolding hidden things, and in pretending to *understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge*. The Curse denounc'd against Man, upon his Fall, was, that with Labour and Sweat he should eat the Fruits of the Ground, as his Punishment, for having eaten the forbidden Fruit: and it was but just with God to punish the Curiosity of Men after forbidden Knowledge, which occasion'd his Fall, with making the Attainment of Knowledge more difficult.

If the Scriptures were all obscure, they would be of little use; if they were all obvious, they would be despised. For if Obscurity be made an Objection by some, their Plainness and Simplicity is objected by others; but God has so order'd and proportion'd the several parts of them, that no Man may have just cause to complain, that he doth not understand enough for his Salvation; nor any Man cast them aside, or read them with little Care and Diligence, since there are so many things in them, which may require the utmost Study and Pains of the most judicious and learned Men.

7. There is no Prophet so obscure, but some Prophecies are very plainly deliver'd by him, which we

know to have been fulfill'd ; and this is a Warrant and Assurance to us of his Mission, and that we ought to rely upon it, that whatever he has deliver'd concerning other things will as certainly come to pass ; and in the mean time, before they come to pass, or are thoroughly understood, they are exceeding useful in the Church. The *Revelation* of St. John is hard to be apply'd to particular Events, because it comprehends so vast a Series of Time, in which long course of years many Events may be exactly alike at different times and in different places, and there may be a gradual and repeated Accomplishment of some of his Prophecies. But the time was at hand for the fulfilling of other of these Prophecies, *Rev. i. 3. xxii. 6, 7, 10, 12.* and we know they have been fulfill'd in the seven Churches, *Rev. ii. 5, 16, 22, 23. iii. 3, 16.* which are proposed for Examples to all others. *He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, Rev. ii. 7.* The seven Churches are spoken to by Name, and what is said to them, having been fulfill'd, is a certain Argument, that the rest, which concerns all other Churches, shall be fulfill'd in its due time, tho' it be not perhaps yet understood.

But the obscurest Prophecies, even before their Accomplishment, are of perpetual and inestimable use to us. It is acknowledg'd by all, that Parables are very proper and fit for Instruction, and therefore in ancient times their Doctrines were wont to be deliver'd in that way ; because it is a more familiar and easy Method of teaching than by Rules, and Precepts, and Rational Discourse, without that Illustration which is given to them by supposing a particular case. For then every one is apt to make the case his own, when he sees the Precepts reduced to Example, and cloath'd with Circumstances, and brought home, as it were, to his very Senses, which before lay more out of Sight, in abstract Notions and Speculative Discourse. And if feign'd cases be so much more effectual than bare Precepts

cepts or Exhortations, an infallible account of the state of the Church in all Ages, tho' we cannot point out the particular times and places, when and where every thing shall come to pass, must needs be of inestimable value and Benefit.

To hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, to observe what Errors and Faults are reprov'd, and what Vertues and Graces are commended and encouraged in the seven Churches of *Asia*; the Praises and Adorations, chap. iv. and the Bliss of the Righteous, the Joys of Heaven, and the Rewards of Martyrs, chap. vii. the Terrors of the Great and Dreadful day, chap. vi. the great Apostacy that was to be upon the Earth, chap. xiii. the Patience and Faith of the Saints, and the Resurrection of the Dead, chap. xx. the Description of the New *Jerusalem*, and the Glory and Happiness of the City of God, chap. xxi. xxii. These are the Subject of *St. John's Revelation*, and are things of the greatest use and importance. We have the state and condition of the Church in all Ages presented to our view, tho' we are not able to mark out the particular times and seasons meant in the several parts of the Prophecy. And this is at least of the same use to us that all History is, and besides may be of as much more benefit, as it more nearly concerns us: for we do not know but that we may be fallen into the worst times there prophecy'd of. *Here is the patience, and the faith of the Saints.* We see the Care and Providence of God over his Church, the wonderful Deliverances which he is pleas'd to work for it, the Supports which he affords his faithful Servants under Persecutions, and the Rewards prepar'd for them, and the final Destruction of the Enemies of God and Religion; these things are visible in the *Revelation*, and it cannot be deny'd, but these are of excellent use, to yield us Comfort in the worst of Troubles, and to excite Faith and Hope, and Patience, and all Christian Graces in the Minds of Men. The *Revelation* of *St. John*
may

may be look'd upon as an History of the Church without any Chronology annex to it; but will any Man say, that the exactest and truest History, that can be penn'd, of the most important Affairs, and such as concern all Mankind, is of little value or consequence to the Conduct and Management of our Lives, unless we were likewise acquainted with the particular time, and the Names of the Places and Persons described in it? It is as much as our Salvation is worth, to be inform'd of a Future Judgment, though we are not told when it shall be; and that Book which sets Rewards and Punishments, Heaven and Hell before us, is of the greatest Advantage for the Edification and Salvation of Men, though the several Circumstances and Particularities described, are unknown to us.

8. Tho' the Arguments from Types are, above all, apt to be look'd upon as uncertain, and to depend rather upon the Conjectures and Fancies of Men, than upon any clear Evidence: Yet we shall find the contrary, if we do but a little consider the Nature of them. A *Type* is a Likeness, a Form, or Mould, (as the word signifies) and where the *Antitype* represented by it, and prefigur'd, answers exactly to it, there is no more question to be made, but that the one belongs to the other, than there is reason to doubt, when we see an Impression made upon Wax, what kind of Seal it was by which it was made; Or, when we see a good Picture of one we know, to enquire who sat for it. A Type is much of the same Nature in Actions or Things and Persons, as an Allegory is in Words: but Allegories are oftentimes so plain, that no Man can well mistake what is meant by them. And thus it is as to Types in many cases: Indeed, where there is but one Type or one Resemblance, it is not so easily discern'd; but where many concur, he must be very wilful that does not acknowledge the Agreement. When an Author, as it often happens, describes the Persons of his own Time under feign'd Names, a
Reader

Reader who knows nothing of it, may perhaps overlook one or two Characters, supposing them to be by chance; but when he perceives that they all exactly agree to so many several Persons whom he knows, he no longer doubts of the Author's Design; especially, when he observes the same Persons described in divers Places, and different ways, according to their Condition and Circumstances of Life, and their Qualifications of Body and Mind. And when many Types concur in the same Person, with a great number of Particularities, any two of which perhaps never concurr'd in any one Man before; as in the Person of our Saviour these things concurr'd, that he was compell'd to carry his Cross, as *Isaac* had carry'd the Wood; that he was lifted up, and fastned to it, as the Brazen Serpent had been lifted up in the Wilderness; that as the Bones of the Paschal Lamb were not broken, so not a Bone of him was broken when the Bones of those were, who were crucify'd with him; and that he was crucify'd at the very time when the Paschal Lamb was to be sacrific'd: when so many different Circumstances concur, which have no Dependence one upon another, nor upon the Will of Him, in whom they concur, but proceed from the Will and (as in this case) from the Malice of others; if these things meet by chance, it must be a very extraordinary and unaccountable Chance indeed, and much such another as that was, which some would persuade us made the World; it must be such a Chance as never happen'd before, nor will ever happen again. But must not these Men rather speak and think by chance, who can argue at this rate?

Sometimes the Characters are so lively, that the Types are as evident as express Words could have made them; as when in the Description of the Kingdom of Christ, he is stiled *David*, because, as he was prefigur'd by *David*, so he was to descend from him, *Jer.* xxx. 9. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24, 25. *Hos.* iii. 5.

iii. 5. several Descriptions which were Metaphorical in reference to the Persons immediately concern'd in them, were literally fulfill'd in our Saviour: Thus the Gall and Vinegar, the Casting of Lots upon the Garments, and the Piercing of the Hands and Feet are Metaphorical Expressions, of great Contempt and Cruelty used towards the Persons to whom they were at first apply'd; but in their ultimate End and Design, they were true to their very Letter. And where there is thus a two-fold Signification of any place of Scripture, the one improper and Metaphorical, the other proper and Literal; the Person describ'd in Metaphorical Terms is as clearly a Type of him, from whose real Condition and Circumstances the Metaphor is taken, as a Metaphor is a Representation of the plain Sense contain'd under it.

The Legal Dispensation was all Typical, and so the *Jews* ever understood it to be; which made the Apostles dispute with them from the Types of their Law, as they surely would never have done, if it had not on all sides been agreed, that it was a proper way of Argument. Their Prophecies were given out in Actions as well as in Words; and as the Mind either of God or Man may be express'd as fully by Actions, as by the plainest Words; so certainly we must acknowledge this to be the case, when Types so evidently denote the Person, and so properly belong to him, as to declare and bespeak him to be the Man, in such a manner that we should conclude, that any Person of our own Times must needs be meant by any Author, who should thus describe him in a Book, the Design whereof was known to be, to make such Descriptions. It is not indeed every Resemblance which we may conclude from, but where many Types concur in the same Person, where the concurrence depends wholly upon the Will of his Adversaries, or not in the least upon his own Will; when these Types were alledged from a Dispensation, which was all along

long held to be Typical ; in this case they may be urged, and as safely relied upon as any other Argument.

III. In the last place, I am to shew that the obscurity of the Scriptures is not such as to be any prejudice to their Authority, nor to the End and Design of them. And the reason of this is implied by St. Peter, when he says, that there are but *some things hard to be understood* in the Scriptures, and the rest are plain and obvious. All things necessary to Salvation are sufficiently clear in the Scripture ; and tho' there be other things in them which are obscure, yet we see that Reasons may be given (and perhaps many more, and better, than I am able to produce) why they are and ought to be so. God supplies us in Necessaries with a bountiful and open Hand ; and what is not necessary, he surely may discover more sparingly, and more obscurely to us. It is so in the things of this Life : Our Senses seldom or never fail us in things necessary to our Life and Health, tho' in other things we find our selves misled by them ; every Country and Place affords the Necessaries of Life ; and that which is most rare, is always least necessary ; it may be useful, but yet we may very well be without it. Now to complain that all places of Scripture are not intelligible by all, is, as if we should blame Providence for not making all Men rich, and all Countries like the Land of Canaan ; it is a sign we are resolved to find fault, and never to be satisfied with what we have, unless we be humoured in every thing. But we should do well first to consider, how we can expect this at God's Hands, or how well we have deserved it of Him. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant,* Psal. xxv. 14. *For the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his Secret is with the Righteous,* Prov. iii. 32. There are Secrets and Mysteries in Religion, which cannot be supposed to be known to any but those, who are
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thoroughly

thoroughly acquainted with the plainer Doctrines, both in the study and the practice of them; and therefore if no such Reasons as have been now offered, could be given for the obscurity of the Scriptures in some places, it would be unreasonable, however, for such Men as make this an Objection, to urge it; they have no right to object, whatever others may have; because they have never used the means to know whether the Scriptures are so obscure, as they pretend, or not. But they will never be able to prove, that if things necessary both in Faith and Practice be clearly set down, there may not be other things delivered which are *hard to be understood*, and which those may *wrest to their own Destruction*, who are *unlearned and unstable*; that is, who have neither Learning and Skill enough to judge of such Matters, nor yet Constancy and Steadfastness enough in the Faith, to adhere to what they do understand, and not to perplex themselves, and suffer themselves to be perverted by judging rashly of things above their Capacity.

The unlearned and unstable only are said to wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction: And tho' it is not in the power and capacity of every Man to be Wise and Learned, yet it is in every one's power not to be unstable, but constant and steadfast to what he understands, and never to depart from it for any By-ends or Respects. Let us learn what is easie to be known, and practise what we know, before we complain that the Scriptures are obscure. Let us study and practise the Scriptures more, and this Objection will not appear so formidable. But the truth is, those that most use it, neither study nor practise them. And yet, after all their Pretences of Obscurity, they have a greater quarrel against the plain parts of Scripture than against the obscure ones; they know many places of Scripture which are plainly against them, and this makes them set themselves against all the rest.

What

What has been here said in general, I hope may be, in some measure, useful to those who desire to read the Scriptures, for their Instruction and Edification; and in particular Difficulties, Books must be consulted, or such Men as may be supposed to understand them. But no Man in common reason, should have recourse to the Enemies of revealed Religion for the Explication of any Difficulties in it. Who ever ^r expected from an Adversary of *Aristotle's*, a true explication of the obscure and difficult parts of his Works? Or, what Man would learn the Geometry of *Archimedes* from *Epicurus*, who set himself to dispute against it, but never understood it? As for all that are fond of Objections, and read the Scriptures only in search of them, it cannot be expected that Discourses of this Nature should signifie much with them. *Teach us, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes, and we shall keep it unto the End. Give us Understanding, and we shall keep thy Law: Yea, we shall keep it with our whole Heart. Great is the Peace, that they have who love thy Law, and they are not offended at it, Psal. cxix. 33, 34, 165.*



C H A P. VIII.

Of Places of Scripture which seem to contradict each other.

I. **T**Hough the sacred Writers no where contradict themselves, or one another, yet they were not solicitous to prevent the being suspected to do so by injudicious and rash Men, as they would have been very cautious of giving any pretence for such a Suspi-

^r August. de Utilitat. Credend. c. 6.

cion, if they had written any thing but Truth. It could not be agreeable to the Sovereign Wisdom and Majesty of God to comply with the Humours and Fancies of Men; but rather, when he had, by an infallible Guidance and Direction, prevented the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures from writing any thing but Truth, to suffer them to write so, as that they might be liable to the Exceptions of the Wilful and Perverse. Because it is more ^a suitable to the simplicity of Truth, not to be over-nice and solicitous about every Punctilio and smaller Circumstance; but to speak fully and intelligibly, and then to leave it to Men, whether they will believe or not; especially in what is told them for their own Advantage, the Relators having no end or design to serve by it, but only to do them the greatest Good they can; and bringing all the Evidence for their Conviction, that Miracles and Prophecies can afford, which are the only Means of God's revealing himself to Mankind; and then suffering in Testimony of what they have delivered.

Thus our Saviour, when, notwithstanding all his mighty Works, many would not believe in him, but questioned his Authority, and reviled his Person, and blasphemed the Holy Spirit, by which they were wrought, was not concerned to work more Miracles, merely for the Satisfaction, or rather at the captious Demands of these Men, when they required him to do it. For if they would be convinced by any reasonable means, he had given it them; if they would not, it would be to their own prejudice, he was not solicitous what they thought of him. And thus it is likewise in the Government of the World; God has given Men sufficient Evidence of his Being and Providence;

^a *Multum enim refert, ut est in Epistolâ Adriani, quam recitat Callistratus L. Testium. D. De Testibus, qui simpliciter visi sunt dicere, utrum unum eundemque meditatam sermonem attulerint, an ad ea, quæ interrogati sunt, ex tempore verisimilia responderint.* Grot. in Adject. ad Dan. c. xiii. 51.

but if Men will disbelieve his Providence, and deny his Being, he doth not vouchsafe by any immediate and particular Act of his Power to confute their pretences. And if, because of some places that are difficult in the Scriptures, Men will reject the whole, rather than be at the pains to search out the true meaning of these places, or than be so modest and humble, as to suppose that there may be ways of reconciling those, which appear to them Contradictions, tho' they have not yet found them out; they must fall under the same Condemnation with those, who will deny the Being of God, if they cannot satisfy themselves how he made and governs the World; or with those that would believe none of our Saviour's Miracles, unless he would work them when, and where, and just in what manner they pleased. But the Wisdom of God sees that nothing would satisfy these Men, and that they only tempt God, and design no real satisfaction to themselves: and therefore he cannot be obliged to new model the World, and alter the Scriptures for their sakes, since there is enough in them for the satisfaction of all that are sincere in their Enquiries after Truth.

II. The only way to judge rightly of the particular places of any Book, is to consider first the whole Design, and Contrivance, and Method, and Stile of it, not to criticize upon some difficult Parts of it, without any regard had to the rest. This is the method used by all, who would criticize with judgment upon any Author. And some Passages of Scripture are explained to our hands, to be a Key, as it were, and a Direction to us in the Explication of others. Thus, whereas in one place it is said, *that Jesus baptized*, in another it is said, *that he baptized not*, and the former place is explained to be meant not of Baptism performed by himself, but by his Disciples, who baptized in his Name, *John iii. 22. iv. 1, 2.*

III. A negative Argument is no proof against the Authority of any History; but if one Author omit what another relates, both may nevertheless write the truth. *Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you*, Luke xxiv. 49. This Promise is not mentioned before in St. *Luke's* Gospel, nor in any other but St. *John's*; which is a thing, says ^b St. *Augustine*, not slightly to be pass'd over: But we ought from hence to take notice, how the Evangelists confirm each others Testimony in some things, which they do not relate themselves, tho' they had knowledge of them. And that here St. *Luke* omits all that pass'd from Christ's Resurrection to his Ascension, tho' he informs us in the Acts of the Apostles, that there was the space of forty Days between.

When two Facts related by several Authors, agree in all but some few Circumstances, they are often taken for the same Fact, and the Authors are supposed to write contrary the one to the other. Both St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* relate, that Christ fed about Five thousand Men (beside Women and Children) with five Loaves and two Fishes, twelve Baskets full of Fragments remaining after they had eaten, *Matth.* xiv. 17. *Mark* vi. 38. And that with seven Loaves and a few little Fishes, he fed four thousand Men (beside Women and Children) and that seven Baskets full of Fragments were taken up, *Matth.* xv. 34. *Mark* viii. 5. But, as ^c St. *Augustine* observes, if one Evangelist had given an account only of the Miracle of the five Loaves, and the other had related only the Miracle of the seven Loaves, these two Miracles might have been taken for but one, and the Evangelists might have been thought to give a contrary account of the same Miracle: From whence he lays this down for a Rule, that if a like Fact be told by two Evan-

^b Aug. de Consens. Evang. l. iii. c. 25.

^c Ib. l. ii. c. 49.

gelists in a different manner, we should rather conclude, that they speak of two different Facts, than that they contradict each other; because in this instance of the Loaves, if both Evangelists had not related both Miracles, they might have been taken for the same. But we may here also observe, that *St. Matthew* says, about five thousand Men were fed by the first Miracle, besides Women and Children; *St. Mark*, that they were about five thousand Men; and the number fed by the second Miracle, *St. Matthew* reckons four thousand Men, beside Women and Children; *St. Mark* says, about four thousand. *St. Matthew* is more particular as to this Circumstance of the Fact, than *St. Mark*, who relates no more than was necessary to give an exact account of the reality of the Miracle; for the Miracle was unquestionably true, whether about five thousand Men were fed, besides Women and Children, or only about five thousand Men; or whether they were four thousand Men beside Women and Children, or about four thousand. What *St. Mark* relates, was sufficient to prove the truth of each Miracle; and of the Persons fed thereby, *St. Matthew* had given a full account, which was dispersed into all hands.

IV. It is reasonable to observe, whether the Objections be not such as do suppose Mistakes, which a Man, who could write such a Discourse, as they are imagined to be found in, could not run into. For if they be of this Nature, this very Consideration is enough to take off the force of the Objection against the Authority of any Book; and we must conclude, that the Objections are capable of being answered, and that the Mistake lies not in the Book it self, but in the Readers, who without sufficient skill or attention, pass a rash judgment upon it. For by all the Rules of Reasoning, an Objection may imply too much, as well as prove too little to be of any force: And the common Rules of Candor and Equity, would prevent ma-

ny Objections which are wont to be made against the Scriptures. For if we will but suppose the writers of the Scriptures to have been Men of any tolerable Sense, even without Inspiration, they could never have committed such Mistakes as some would fasten upon them. *Israel beheld Joseph's Sons, and said, Who are these?* Gen. xlviii. 8. and yet *the Eyes of Israel were dim for Age, so that he could not see*, ver. 10. i. e. he could not see plainly and distinctly the Objects before him. In like manner, we read, *Exod xxxiii. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a Man speaketh unto his Friend:* yet, ver. 20. the Lord answers *Moses*, who had besought God to shew him his Glory: *Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no Man see me, and live.* Would it not be impudent trifling to pretend any Contradiction in these two Verses, when they are easily understood in a consistent sense, and no Man of any judgment can be supposed to write Contradictions, and lay them so near together? God himself spake immediately to *Moses*, not by the Message of an Angel, *even apparently, and not in dark Speeches*, Num. xii. 8. When it is said, *Acts ix. 7. that the Men, who journeyed with St. Paul, heard a Voice, but saw no Man:* and, *Acts xxii. 9. that they heard not the Voice of him that spake to St. Paul:* The plain meaning is, that they heard a Voice, but could not distinguish what was said. They heard not an articulate Voice, but they heard a Sound [*ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς*] for *φωνή* signifies any kind of Sound, as well as an articulate Voice: the Sound of a Trumpet, *Matt. xxiv. 31.* the Sound of the Wind, *John iii. 8.* the Sound of a Pipe or Harp, *1 Cor. xiv. 7.* *The seven thunders uttered their Sounds*, *ἐλάλησαν τὰς ἐαυτῶν φωνάς.* Apoc. x. 3. But besides the Explications which are known and obvious to reconcile these Texts, those, who will not be at the pains to consult Expositors, or to consider the importance of the Words, may be pleased to observe, that *St. Luke* was a Man bred to Learning; and this Hi-
story

story of the Acts of the Apostles, shews him to have been, at least, a prudent and wise Man; and therefore he could never have written so palpable a Contradiction, as the Objection must suppose, in so small a compass, concerning one of the most remarkable things in his whole History, relating to a Person, with whom he constantly travelled and convers'd. I appeal to any Man, whether, if he had met with two such Passages, which seem to contradict each other, in *Thucydides* or *Xenophon*, or even in the very worst Historian, he would not be enclined rather to seek out for some way of reconciling them, than to suspect that he could so soon forget what he had written so little a while before, in an account of a thing of that nature. Of the same kind is that difference, which is between the Genealogy of Christ in *St. Matthew*, and that in *St. Luke*. For there is no doubt but the Genealogies of the *Jews* were then, and long after, extant in the Publick Registers, ^d they could repeat them by heart with as much readiness as they could their own Names; and to insert a wrong Genealogy, had been to give up all the Arguments that could be alledg'd for our Saviour's being the Christ: Nothing could be more destructive to their Cause, than for the Evangelists to produce a false Pedigree, when the true one might be so easily produced by any who had a mind to disprove them. The Merits of their Cause wholly depended upon the Proof of Christ's Descent from *Abraham* and *David*; and therefore whatever difficulties there may now be thought to be in this two-fold Genealogy, it was certainly acknowledged by those of that Age, and beyond all Dispute, or else it would never have been produced by the Evangelists, or had for ever ruin'd their Cause, if they had produced it.

^b *Ab exordio Adam usque ad extremum Zorobabel, omnium generationes ita memoriter velociterque percurrunt, ut eos suum putes referre nomen,* Hieron. in Tit. iii. 9.

Some Crimes are too great to charge upon Men of any Credit or Reputation ; and some Errors are so notorious that no Man of common Prudence can be supposed to commit them : And therefore when we find an Author rational and consistent in other parts of a Discourse, the ordinary Ingenuity and Candour of Mankind will hinder us from supposing him to commit gross and palpable Mistakes ; and it is great Disingenuity and Folly to shew the less Respect to any Author, because he is at least believ'd to have written by Inspiration, or to deny him the Respect due to a Man, because God has enabled him to write infallible Truth.

V. If any Contradictions be framed or forced from the various Readings, the Difficulties in Chronology, or whatever else of this nature is to be found in the Disputes of Criticks, they prove no more against the Authority of the Scriptures, than they do against the Authority of all other Books in the World ; unless it could be shewn that these Difficulties could not happen in a Book written by Divine Inspiration, but that it must be first written in such a manner as to afford no occasion for Disputes ; and that it must be ever after so preserv'd by a constant Miracle, that it may be subject to none of the Accidents and Casualties, to which all other Books are liable. On the contrary, it can never be proved, that God might not permit Books written by Inspiration, to be obnoxious to any such Casualties as are not prejudicial to the End and Design of a Revelation. But if the *necessary* Points of *Doctrine* be preserv'd entire, and the *Evidence of Matters of Fact* be sufficient to prove the Truth of the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* in Confirmation of that *Doctrine* ; all lesser Matters may be left to the same Contingencies which befall all other Books in the World.

That the Evidence is very clear and full in Proof both of the *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, which demonstrate

strate to us the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, has been already shewn, and if no more could be produced than has by me been brought to prove their Authority ; yet unless this can be proved to be insufficient from some Mistakes or Defects in it, no such Objections can invalidate it : Because no Man can prove that God might not suffer a Book written by his own Appointment and Authority, to be encumber'd through length of Time, and the Frailty and Negligence of Men, with insuperable Difficulties, if it be supposed still to retain the visible Marks and Characters of a Divine Original in all the *Evidence* necessary to prove it from *Matter of Fact*, and in the *Doctrines* deliver'd by it. For as long as these two things are secured, all the rest, though it be of never so great Use and Excellency, yet cannot be necessary in order to the ends of a Divine Revelation. And therefore a Book of Divine Revelation might be permitted by God for the Sins, and by the Fault and Ignorance of Men, to become perplex'd with abundance of divers Readings, and even with Contradictions in the Chronological and less material Points of it. For so long as it cannot be proved Defective as to the ends and purposes of a Divine Revelation, either for want of Evidence to make it appear to be such, or thro' Defect of the Matter and Doctrine contain'd in it ; all other Difficulties will never prove it not to be of Divine Authority, because so long there is no Defect, but what might be in any Book, tho' we suppose it to be of Divine Authority.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Creation of the World, and the Preservation of it.

BY *Creation* in the Book of *Genesis*, is understood not only the Production of the World out of Nothing, but the Formation and Disposal of the several Parts of the Universe. But there has an Opinion of late years prevail'd, very injurious to Religion, and repugnant to Reason and the Judgment of former Ages; that God only created Matter and gave it Motion, to be perform'd under certain Laws, by which all the *Phænomena* of Nature both in the Creation and Preservation of Things are brought about, without any farther immediate Divine Power or Concourse, than what is just necessary to continue this Matter and Motion in Being, that is, God created Matter, and put it into Motion, and then Matter and Motion do all the rest in a settled Course, and by establish'd Laws, without any need of the Divine Aid or Direction. This Notion indeed can never be reconcil'd to the Scriptures, but then it is as little befriended by Reason and Natural Religion. In proof of which, I shall consider: I. The Creation of the World. II. The Preservation of it; and shall shew, that neither of them could be perform'd in this way.

I. As to the Creation, we may consider both the *Time* and the *Manner* of it. And by the *Time* of the Creation, we may understand either the *Time*, when the Creation of the World began, or the *Time* which was taken up in the Creation of it. But this latter Sense will come under what is to be said of the *Manner* of the Creation.

I. The *Time* of the Creation of the World, as that signifies the Beginning of *Time*, or of the World's

Duration,

Duration, must be wholly Arbitrary, and absolutely at God's Sovereign Pleasure and Disposal. For there could be nothing in eternal Duration to fix the Creation of the World more to one time than another, or to determine why it should begin sooner or later. And since it is impossible that the World should be eternal, it is evident, that the Time of the Creation, whenever it was, can be no good Objection, because, tho' the World had been created never so long before, there must necessarily have been as much a Pretence for such an Objection. For there must have been some Period of Time, when the World had existed no longer than it has done now : and no beginning of the World can be supposed so long ago, but still it might with the same Reason be ask'd, why it was not created sooner ?

2. In considering the *Manner* of the World's Creation, I shall prove, (1.) That there is no Reason to suppose the World to have been at the first made by Mechanical Laws, though it were preserv'd according to such Laws. (2.) That there are sufficient Reasons to be given for its Creation in that manner, which we find related in the Book of *Genesis*.

(1.) There is no Reason to suppose the World to have been at first made by Mechanical Laws, though it were preserved according to such Laws, (whereas I shall afterwards prove, that it is not preserv'd according to them.) There is no Reason that the World should be first framed according to the Laws of Motion, which are establish'd for its Preservation and Government in its fix'd and settled State. The Origine of the Universe was by the immediate hand of God, before the Appointment of the several Laws, which afterwards were to take place; and we may as well endeavour to reduce the working of Miracles to the standing Laws of Nature as the Creation of the World. For certainly of all Miracles the Creation of the World must be the greatest, not only as it signifies

fies the Production of Matter and Motion out of Nothing, but as it was the putting things into such Order, as to make them capable of the Laws of Motion ordain'd for them. It is not yet agreed, nor is it ever like to be, what these Laws of Motion are, which the Philosophers so much talk of, and there being such a mutual Connexion and Combination of Bodies, and such a Dependence of every Body upon so many others in every Motion, it is impossible to know how any two Bodies would act upon each other, if they were separate from all Bodies besides, or were out of that State which they now are in. It is reasonable therefore to imagine, that the several Parts of the World must be ranged and settled before these Laws could take place; and to reduce the Creation of the World to the Laws of Motion which now prevail in it, is to suppose a Creation antecedent to that by which the World was made. This is as if an *Indian* should attempt to give an Account of the making of a Watch by the several Motions, which he sees perform'd in it after it is made, and should imagine that the Materials moving in such a manner, at last arriv'd to the exact frame of a Watch. It is confess'd, that the first Animals could be produced by no Laws of Motion, or Powers of Nature: and is it not as reasonable to believe, that the rest of the Creation was effected by the same miraculous Operation, and (according to the Style of *Moses*) by such a Divine Command, as had its immediate Effect, without any Intervention of Second Causes?

(2.) There are sufficient Reasons to be given for the Creation of the World in that manner, which we find related in the Book of *Genesis*. It is great Presumption in Men to be too curious and inquisitive about the Reasons of God's Actions: for whatever he delivers of himself, we ought entirely to believe both the Thing it self, and the Manner and Circumstances of it. *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of*
the

the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding, Job xxxviii. 4. But this must be said to the Glory of God, and to the Shame of all such as censure and cavil at his Word, that even by Men such Reasons may be given of his Actions, as all his Adversaries shall not be able to gainsay.

God hath ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight, Wisd. xi. 20. And as to those who enquire, why the World was created in six days rather than in one day, or in an instant, or in a long Compass of Years, as the Laws of Matter and Motion, they say, require: It might be sufficient to ask, why, if it was God's Will, the World might not be created in six Days, as well as in any other number of Days, or space of Time? If the Creation had been in an instant, or in a longer or shorter space of Time, the Question might with as much Reason have been put, why it was not created in six Days? Shall Men presume to prescribe to God the Time and Manner of his Actions? Is not his own Pleasure a sufficient Reason of them? The Manner of the Creation and of the Flood, which have of late been the Subject of so many Disputes, depends solely upon the Will and Pleasure of God, and therefore we can know only by Revelation, how they were effected, and it is in vain to pretend that they must have come to pass in this or that manner, unless it could be prov'd, that God could not bring them to pass any other way than that, which the Inventor of some *Hypothesis* thinks fit to propose. Most Actions may be perform'd very different ways; and if, for instance, we had only a general account of the Passage of the *Israelites* out of *Ægypt* into the Land of *Canaan*; that *Pharaoh* pursuing them, was drown'd with his whole Army, that they travell'd in the Wilderness forty Years, and had a sufficient Provision of Food, and Cloathing, and Water for so great a Multitude, in so barren a place, and for so long a time: tho' never so many Conjectures should

should be made, how all this might be, and never so many Schemes were drawn of their Journeyings and Encampments; if it could be supposed possible, that one of all these might prove true, yet it would be utterly impossible to know which were it. But when we are only told, that God created the World in six Days, and that such and such things were created on each of these Days, that he brought a Deluge of Waters upon the whole Earth, for the Sins of Mankind; which continued for such a time upon the face of the Earth; some Men will needs assign the particular Means and Manner, by which both the Creation and the Flood must necessarily have been brought to pass, as if the Wisdom and Power of God, and the Nature of things could admit of no other way, but what they can explain. We may esteem the Learning, and admire the Sagacity, and allow the good Intentions of these Authors; but when any one advanceth an *Hypothesis* in contradiction to all others, and proposes it, not as probable, but as the only true Explication of Scripture, and positively maintains, not only that things might be so, if God pleas'd, but that they were so, and could not be otherwise; this to me seems more unaccountable, than any thing I ever met with besides, in the very worst *Hypothesis*. We can know nothing of the way and manner how God has been pleas'd to do any thing but by his own Revelation. If each *Hypothesis* were possible, yet no Man could be certain which were the right, or that any of them were so; because God might make use of some other Means than what Men can imagine. But when the several *Hypotheses* destroy one another, and every one pretends to set up his own in contradiction to all the rest, and none can maintain its Ground any longer than till another has been brought to confute it, it were strange, if Men should satisfy themselves with such Uncertainties, rather than with the plain Word of God.

Accor-

According to any Mechanical *Hypothesis*, (tho' there were no *Vacuum*) so many Accidents must continually intervene in a Chaos of Matter confusedly rolling and knocking one part of it against another, that it seems next to an impossibility, that it should ever settle into any Order: at least, if Matter had been left to its own workings and jumbings according to any Mechanical Laws of Motion, the World, for ought any Man can prove, might not have been made to this moment. So far is it from being possible to understand, how, upon Mechanical Principles, the World should have been made in six Years, rather than in six Days, consisting of four and twenty Hours. It is therefore the boldest Attempt that can be conceived, for Men to pretend to assign the several steps and degrees in the process of this wonderful Operation, with as much ease and certainty, as if they had all the Materials by them in their Laboratory, and could perform it as readily as an ordinary course of Chymistry. Next to attempt the making of a World, what Undertaking can be more daring than to pretend to discover how it was made? To make a World must undoubtedly be the Work of God, and he alone can declare how he made it. But Reasons may be given for the Creation of the World in six Days; 1. With respect to Angels; 2. With respect to Men.

1. With respect to the Angels. It is ^a St. *Austin's* Opinion, that the six Days of the Creation of the World in the Book of *Genesis*, are distinguished according to the Perception which the Angels had of the Creation; from whence was framed that distinction of the ^b Schoolmen, between *Cognitio Matutina*, and *Cognitio Vespertina*. And tho' what I am about to say, is not exactly agreeable to St. *Austin's* Notion,

^a Aug. super. Gen. ad Literam. lib. iv. c. 22, &c. De Civit. Dei, lib. xi. c. 7.

^b Tho. Aquin. Sum. Part 1. Q. 58. Art. 6.

yet I hope his Authority will warrant my arguing from this Topick, to such as may think it new and singular.

The Angels were the beginning of the Creation, and were created probably in the Morning of the first Day. For in the Book of *Job*, God says, that when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, *the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy*, *Job xxxviii. 7.* from whence we learn, that the Angels were created before this visible World, and glorified God for his creating it. Now the Angels, tho' blessed and glorious Spirits, yet are infinite, and are unable to comprehend and fathom the wonderful Works of God; there are things which *the Angels desire to look into*, *1 Pet. i. 12.* and the more they know of God and his Works, the more they adore and praise him. The whole Scene of the Creation seems to have been laid open in order before them, according to the several degrees and the various natures of things, whereby they must have had a fuller view and a clearer understanding of the Divine Power and Wisdom, than they could have had, if the World had started forth in an instant, and jump'd, as it were, into this beautiful Frame and Order. As he who sees the whole method and contrivance of any curious Piece of Art, values and admires the Artist more than one does that beholds it in Gross. God was pleased therefore to display his Glory before the Angels, and by several steps and degrees, to excite their Praise, and Love, and Adoration, which moved them to *Songs and Shouts of Joy*, and by this means his Glory and their own Happiness was advanced, much beyond what it would have been, if all things had been created and disposed into their Rank and Order at one moment. They look'd into the first Principles and Seeds of Things, and every day presented them with a glorious spectacle of new Wonders; the first seven Days of the World, they kept a continual Triumph
or

or Jubilee; and thus their Voices were tun'd and rais'd, as I may say, to those Praises, which were to be their Employment and their Happiness to all Eternity; the more they saw, the more they knew, and the more they know of the Works of God, the more they for ever love and adore him.

This affords us a Reason, why so much more time was spent in the forming of the Earth, and the Creatures belonging to it, than in the formation of the heavenly Bodies. Because the Heavens are of an uniform and similar Nature; and a vast *Vacuum* is now supposed to be in them, and therefore the Nature of them might, without any successive Production, be displayed at once to the Angels; but the Earth being of a compound Nature, and containing Creatures of very different kinds, it required more time to give a distinct Perception of the several Parts and Species of it. And the Planets being of the like nature with the Earth, since the Earth, the Seat of Man's Habitation was framed by such leisurely degrees, as might give a suitable Idea of it; the other Planets might be framed at once, there being nothing more in them than what was observable in the formation of the Earth, or they might be framed together with the Earth by the same Measures and Degrees.

But according to the mechanical way, the Angels would have only the prospect of a vast Chaos, rolling and working for many thousands of Years, perhaps before any thing considerable could have been framed out of it: And those tedious Delays must yet, according to this Notion, have been carried on by such certain Methods, that there could have been little wonderful in it to an Angel, when the mechanical Philosophers themselves think they can point out the several Steps and Motions by which all was done.

The making of Man was the last and finishing Work of the Creation, when the World was prepared for the reception of him, and he was made with much Solemnity.

lemnity. *Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness*, Gen. i. 26. and the Man and the Woman were made apart. For *Adam* was created with all the Perfections suitable for him, both as a *Man*, and as the *first Man*, out of whom *Eve* was to be formed: As *Man* he was to have all the Parts and Faculties which Men have now, but in greater perfection; as the first *Man*, he was besides to have a *Rib*, or ^c*Part*, out of which the Woman was to be made. Which being the principal, and, as it were, the seminal Matter, no mention is made of any other; but as Animals and Plants are properly said to come from the Seed, tho' they are not made of that only; so *Eve* was properly made of *Adam's Rib*, tho' other Matter besides might go to her Composition. This way of Formation was to betoken that Love and Duty which ought to be between Husband and Wife. And as the Creation and Happiness of Man provoked the Envy of Evil Angels, so no doubt it occasioned the Joy and Praise of the Good ones.

2. By this successive and gradual production and disposition of things in six days at the Creation, the Glory of God is likewise more manifested to Men than it would have been, if all had been done at once, or by slow and tedious Methods. This gives us a more clear and distinct comprehensive Notion of the Works of God than we could otherwise have had. It is acknowledged, that *Moses* has given such an Account of the Creation, as is more intelligible and better adapted to the Capacities of the generality of Men, than that which any one would now obtrude upon us as a true Account of it: But whatever Reasons can be

^c *Dicunt etiam Unam ex costis ejus idem esse quod unam ex partibus ejus, vel unam partem ejus, quam explicationem confirmant ex eo quod in Targum vocabulum Tzelah costa redditur per Setar ut Tzelah costa Tabernaculi redditur in Targum per Setar latus Tabernaculi, ita hic dicunt Mitzalotar idem esse quod Miffitrohi. Maimon. More Nevoch. Part 2. c. 30.*

assigned why the Creation should be described as it is in the Book of *Genesis*; the same Reasons will prove, that it was fitting it should be so performed: If it be more suitable to the Capacities and Apprehensions of Men, that the Creation of the World should be delivered to us as finished in six days, rather than in a less or a longer time; it was fit that it should have been really finished in this space of time, and should be indeed so performed as might make the History the more useful to us. For, in respect of God, it was alike to create all things in an instant, or to do it successively in a shorter or a longer time; and in respect of Mankind, no Reason can be assigned why the History of the Creation should be delivered so as to represent it to Men as performed in this manner; but the same Reason will hold, why it should have been in the same manner performed.

God blessed the seventh Day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his Work which God created and made, Gen. ii. 3. and so, Exod. xx. 10, 11. the Observation of the Sabbath, or of one Day in seven to the Honour of God, is established upon the World's being created in six Days; and therefore, if it be reasonable to keep one Day in seven holy, in remembrance of the Creation, it must be reasonable that the Creation of the World should have been performed in six Days, since the obligation to observe a seventh Day in remembrance of the Creation, implies that God rested on the seventh Day after he had created the World in six, or in the same space of time, which is contained in six Days. God saw it fitting that a Day should be set apart to commemorate the Creation, and to praise him for all his wonderful Works, and that this Day should return at such a distance of time; and he observed such Order in the Creation, that every Day between these Periods of Time, might bring some particular Work of it to remembrance, and every seventh Day might conclude in the Commemoration of the whole Creation.

Our Saviour answers the Pharisees, when they proposed the Question to him about Divorces, by putting them in mind of the Order which God used in the Creation, *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them Male and Female? and said, for this cause shall a Man leave Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his Wife, and they twain shall be one Fleesh?* Marth. xix. 4, 5. And St. Paul in like manner, to shew that the Woman ought not to usurp Authority over the Man, proves it by this Argument: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve,* 1 Tim. ii. 13. and in another place, and upon another occasion, he observes, that *the Man is not of the Woman, but the Woman of the Man,* 1 Cor. xi. 8. And long before the Prophet Malachi had argued from the same Topick, *Malach. ii. 15.* And *Heb. iv. 4.* it is noted, that God did rest the seventh Day from all his Works; from whence the Apostle concludes, that *he that is entred into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own Works, as God did from his,* ver. 10. Now as these, and whatever other Arguments are to be found in the Scriptures of the like nature, do evidently suppose the Creation of the World in the same manner, as it is related in the Book of *Genesis*; so they explain to us the Reasons why it was thus created. For all these Arguments had been lost, and there could have been no ground for them, if the World had been otherwise created. As certainly therefore as this Arguing from the manner of the Creation is good; so certain it is, both that the World was so created, and that there was great reason for it.

But whatever some Philosophers may think now, there is nothing which would have been more disagreeable to the Notions of the generality of the wisest Men in all Ages, than that the World should be made upon mechanical Principles. *He spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast,* Psal. xxxiii. 9. *He commanded, and they were created,* Psal. cxlviii. 5.

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This expresses not only the truth of the History, but the general sense of Mankind, who have ever had this Notion of God ^d, that to command and to do is the same thing with him. And therefore the Objection, till of late, has run the other way, that God did rather create the World in an instant than in six Days. It was little suspected formerly, that divers Years or many Ages were spent in the Creation. It was in the Description of the Creation of the World, that *Longinus* observed the sublime Style of *Moses*, and if the Relation of it be admirable, the Creation it self, in such a manner as is there related, must be much more admirable. For it is proper for it to be thus described, for no other reason, but because it was proper for it in this manner to be done. But what would *Longinus* have said, if the Creation had been related to have been performed, not by any command which had its immediate effect, but by the tedious process of mechanical Causes? What Grandeur, what Evidence of the Divine Power and Majesty is there in this more than in any Chymical Operation, if the mechanical *Hypothesis* were true?

It were strange Presumption to demand of Almighty God a Reason of all his Actions, and not to believe him upon his Word, that he has done any thing, but when and how some Men conceit it ought to have been done. But what I have now said, may at least serve to silence the Cavils of such Men.

II. The Preservation of the World is not performed according to mechanical Laws or Principles. The mechanical *Hypothesis* supposes that Bodies act upon Bodies, or Actives upon Passives, in a certain course, and according to such Laws, as that being left to themselves, they necessarily produce their Effects

^d Εξ ημερῶν δημιουργηθῆναι φησι τὸν κόσμον, ἐκ ἐπειδὴ προτεθεῖτο χρόνων μήκας ὁ ποιῶν· αἷμα γὰρ δεῶν εἶκος θεὸν, ἔ' προσάτλον α μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διανοούμενον. Philo de Mundi. Opific. initio.

without any immediate interposition of a Divine Power. But this Notion is grounded wholly upon Mistakes.

1. It supposes that there was at first a certain quantity of Motion infused or impressed upon Matter, which still continues passing from one Body to another, according to certain Methods or Rules prescribed. But this Supposition that there is always the same Quantity of Motion in the World, is wholly precarious, or rather notoriously false: For upon the encrease of Mankind, and of all other Animals, must not Motion, in which all Animal Life consists, necessarily encrease in the same Proportion? Or, is there the same Motion in the Food we eat, that there is in the Blood and Animal Spirits? And the best Philosophers have been able to give no account how Motion can be communicated without an immediate impulse or concurrence of the Divine Power.

2. By the mechanical *Hypothesis*, it is supposed as a thing certain, that there is a *Plenum*, which at least is very uncertain, or rather it has been demonstrated by Sir *Isaac Newton*, that there is a *Vacuum* not only interspersed, but of a prodigious, and almost incredible extent, at the distance of the Earth's Semidiameter from us. And by his Principles, Gravitation must proceed from an immediate and constant impression or impulse of God. For it proceeds from no Action of one Body upon another, but is a Quality belonging to all Matter alike, and to every Particle of Matter, however separate and distant from all others. The *Projectile* Motion, and that *Attractive* Force, by which the Planets are carried in their Orbits, cannot be communicated or performed according to any mechanical Laws, whereby they are determined from a *Rectilinear* to an *Orbicular* Motion. For Bodies can act upon Bodies only by contact, and therefore cannot communicate their Motion, or any way determine, or affect the Motion of each other in a *Vacuum*,

cium, so vast as it must be near the circumference of the several Orbits, so that the old *Occult Qualities* and *Substantial Forms* were not more repugnant to the Mechanical *Hypothesis* than these Principles are. The Being of a *Vacuum* must suppose an immediate Divine Power necessary to keep the System of the World in that Order in which we see it continue. For otherwise by this Principle of Gravitation's being inherent in every part of Matter, all Bodies would press towards the Center, and in a *Vacuum* there can be nothing to hinder their Tendency towards it, till they come crowding one upon another; so that all the Order of things would soon be reduced to one confused Heap or Mass, unless some immaterial Power interposed to hinder it.

It is evident then, that the Mechanical *Hypothesis* is quite destroy'd by these Principles. For by these here is no Connexion of Causes and Effects according to any Laws of mere Matter and Motion; but all must be done by the immediate Power of God, Gravitation and the Projectile Motion must be impress'd and suspended without any Dependence upon surrounding Bodies; they must produce their Effects through prodigious void Spaces, where Bodies have no Communication of Motion from one to another. And all being perform'd by the immediate directing and assisting hand of God, a Man may as well pretend to solve a Miracle mechanically, as to give any Account of the *Phænomena* of Nature by Mechanical Laws according to these Principles. Through an immense void space, the Sun's Rays find their regular and constant way, and in a few minutes pass from the Sun to the Earth; for which there is no Cause assignable from the Attractive Power; which should rather detain the Rays of Light in a perpetual Circulation about the Sun's Center, than dart them forth, by so violent a Motion, to the remotest Distances. But *God said, let there be light, and there was light, Gen. i. 14. He has prepar'd*

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the light and the sun, Psal. lxxiv. 16. This is the best and most philosophical account, that has ever been given of the Production of Light. For by a late Discourse of the same ^cexcellent Author last mention'd, it is evident, that all the *Phænomena* of Light depend upon no Mechanical Laws, but are directly contrary to them. He shews, " That all homogeneous Light has
" its proper Colour, answering to its Degree of Refrangibility, or to speak properly, it has a certain
" Power and Disposition to excite this or that Colour; and the Colour cannot be changed by Reflexions or Refractions: That the Whiteness of the
" Sun's Light is compounded of all the Primary Colours mix'd in a due Proportion. That every Ray
" of Light, in its Passage through any refracting Surface, is put into a certain transient Constitution or
" State, which in the Progress of the Ray returns at certain Intervals, and disposes the Ray at every Return to be easily transmitted through the next refracting Surface, and between the Returns to be easily refracted by it. These Returns he terms, its
" *Fits of easy Refraction*, and its *Fits of easy Transmission*, and the Space between the Returns, the *Intervals of its Fits*; and the Intervals of these *Fits* have
" Analogy to the Notes in Musick. Lastly, that the Cause of Reflexion is not the impinging of Light
" on the solid or impervious parts of Bodies, as is commonly believ'd. From all which we may conclude, that Natural Philosophy must now be no longer look'd upon as a Science, but a History; and he is to be esteem'd the best Philosopher, who can best discover the Operations of Nature, and least pretends to Mechanical Explications of them.

3. The Abettors of the Mechanical *Hypothesis* argue, that God acts in the most general and uniform ways;

^c Sir Is. Newton's *Opticks*, l. i. p. 87, 90, 98. l. ii. p. 65, 77, 78, 81, 83.

that

that it is more becoming his Wisdom to let Nature have its Course ; and that constantly to interpose, would be a Disparagement to the Order and Contrivance in his Establishment of the Laws of Motion ; that Matter and Motion are with that Wisdom set to work, that they can perform all without any more than preserving and sustaining them in their Being and Operations ; and that he is the best Artist, who can contrive an Engine that shall need the least meddling with, after it is made. But it ought to be consider'd, what the Nature of the Engine is, and what the ends and uses of it are, and if the Nature of it be such, that it cannot answer the ends for which it was framed without sometimes an assisting hand, it would be no point of Wisdom in the Artificer, for the Credit of his Contrivance, to lose the most useful Ends design'd by it. As if among other uses this curious Engine were design'd to reward the good, and punish bad Men ; to remove the Punishment upon Amendment, and to renew it upon a Relapse : Since Brute Matter is incapable of varying its Motion, and suiting it self to the several States and Changes of Free Agents ; he must assist it unless he will lose the Chief end for which it is to serve. It is no defect in the Skill and Wisdom of the Almighty, that Matter and Motion have not Free Will as Men have : But it would be a great defect in his Wisdom, not to make them the Instruments of Rewards and Punishments, because it is impossible for them of themselves to apply and suit themselves to the several States and Conditions of Free Agents.

The Nature of Matter and Motion is such, that they cannot serve all the designs of their Creator without his Interposition, and therefore he constantly doth interpose according to a certain Tenour which he has prescribed to himself ; but this Tenour and Course is alter'd upon some important Occasions. In a natural and ordinary way he cures Diseases, sends Rain or

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dry Weather, or else our Prayers to him would be insignificant upon such Occasions, and there would be no room left for his inflicting these Temporal Rewards and Punishments. He feeds the Hungry that cry to him, and he punishes the Wicked, when he sees it fitting, by Famine, or Drought, or Pestilence, *and causes it to rain upon one City, and causes it not to rain upon another City* (Amos iv. 7.) in the ordinary methods of his Providence. But sometimes he alters these ordinary methods, and acts above them or contrary to them, to signalize his Mercy or his Judgments: And thus Christ fed so many thousands in the Wilderness, and God rain'd down Fire from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by a particular and miraculous Dispensation. Miracles are the particular Appointment of God in peculiar Cases and Occasions, and the Course of Nature is his general and perpetual Appointment at all other times. God at no time leaves Nature to it self, but ever concurs with it, by assisting its power and directing its course; he ordinarily interposes in the constant course of Things, according to establish'd Laws: But Miracles are his wonderful Work, when he interposes in an extraordinary manner, and alters that method which he has prescribed to himself to observe in the common course of Nature. God doth not in an extraordinary manner interpose to prevent the irregular or unusual Productions of Nature, as in monstrous Births, &c. For how irregular soever these may seem, yet they are according to this standing Rule, that they shall be suffer'd to happen in certain Cases; and they rarely happening, serve to illustrate the Divine Wisdom in contriving Nature, so that in its general course all its Operations should be regular and uniform; and from hence it appears that God doth not extraordinarily interpose to alter the course of Nature; but for great Ends, superior to those which concern only the material World.

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We may well suppose that God has as much Regard to his Wisdom in his Government of the Moral, as of the material Part of the Creation; and yet he has added supplemental Laws to enforce the moral Laws, and these additional Laws have been changed, as the Circumstances and Condition of Men required. Why then should the Laws of the material World be so much more sacred, as that he should never intermeddle with them? He assists moral Agents with the continual Supplies of his Grace, and Natural Agents with that Help which is needful for them to perform his Will. God may hasten and assist Natural Causes upon our Prayers, he may quicken the motions and enforce the Powers of Nature, and remove secret Impediments, to help and make way for Natural Operations, or he may suspend or retard Natural Causes.

To say that God has so order'd the course of Nature, as upon the Foresight of Mens Prayers to him, to grant them what they pray for, and upon the Foresight that they will not pray, to withhold from them what they want by Mechanical Laws, is by no means satisfactory. For there is neither Proof nor possibility of Proof of it; it is merely a Supposition without any ground of Reason, but only this, that the Mechanical Notion cannot otherwise be maintain'd. But I will suppose with much more Reason, that two Men are sick of the same Disease, that the Circumstances of the Disease are all the same, and all outward Accidents likewise the same, till the Prayers of one of them make a Difference. For one of these Men upon his Prayers recovers, the other neglecting to pray, dies. The Natural Causes are supposed to be the same, excepting only so far as Prayer moves God in his mercy to make a Difference in their Case. To say that this never happen'd, is wholly precarious; and hard to believe; since it probably may often happen in Epidemical Distempers; but it is much harder to believe that it can never happen; and if this either

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have or can happen, it is not upon Foresight of their Prayers, by the Contrivance of Mechanical Laws in their first Establishment, but by an immediate Act, that God assists Men upon their Prayers to him. The strange Providential Deliverances of some certain Persons are observable in every Age, and all Histories mention them. But how shall particular Men, amidst the greatest Dangers, be preserv'd in the common Calamities of the Sword, and Famine, and Pestilence, but by a particular interposing Providence? Were these Men, who have been so remarkably preserv'd, all of one Constitution? Or do Soldiers slay mechanically, tho' the Plague and Famine should be supposed to do so? I wonder it should be thought less agreeable to Philosophy, for God to interpose in directing Natural Causes than in over-ruling moral Agents, where the Designs of Divine providence equally require it. The same Providence delivers both *from the snare of the hunter, and from the noisom pestilence. A thousand shall fall before thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee, Psal. xci. 3, 7.*

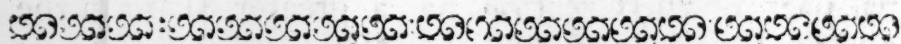
4. The Mechanical Philosophy proceeds upon a wrong Notion of God, supposing it unworthy of him to be concern'd immediately in every thing which is done. We may as well imagine it below him to know every thing, as suppose it unworthy of him to concern himself in it: And yet he cannot but know every thing, being Omniscient; and he cannot but concur in every Operation of Natural Causes, being Omnipresent, and wherever he is, he acts. It is the Perfection of the Eye to see all that is within View, how small and inconsiderable soever it be; nay, the smaller the Object discern'd is, the more perfect it proves the Sight to be: And if a Man could do every little thing at the same time that he does things of Importance, and with no Trouble to himself, it would be surely more Perfection in him than to do these only. But a Variety of Business is troublesome to Men, and small Affairs

Affairs hinder and call them off from those of moment. Tho' with God it is quite otherwise; he acts with the same Ease wherewith he sees or knows or exists; he knows all things with one Omniscient Thought, and he does all things by one Omnipotent Act, nothing can be in the least difficult to him, and nothing can be done without him, *in Him we live and move and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. And what the Scripture delivers relating to the Creation and Preservation of the World, may, in strictness of Philosophy, be taken in a proper and literal Sense. But do Men indeed consider what it is to make and preserve a World, when they pretend to shew by what steps God proceeds in it, and to explain the whole Process, as it were, of the Operation? Is there not infinite Wisdom required to know what infinite Power only can effect?

And after all, it is very probable both from Scripture and from Reason, that the invisible and immaterial part of the Creation has a greater Share in the Guidance and Conduct of the visible and material part of it, than is commonly supposed. For since the wonderful Improvement of experimental Philosophy, and the various *Hypotheses* which have been rais'd upon it; Men have been apt to look upon natural Philosophy not only as a distinct Science, but as wholly separate from the rest, as if there were no Subordination and Dependence between the visible and invisible World; whereas it is reasonable to believe, that there is a continued Connexion and Chain of Causes in the Operations and Productions of things, and a constant Influence and Intercourse between the superior and inferior created Beings. It is certain that God useth the Ministry of Angels in the Government of the World, but how far, and to what particular purposes, and upon what occasions, no Man is able to determine: However, those who have been the most curious Enquirers into Nature, daily meet with so many new
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and strange Discoveries, that they have been forc'd to complain, that the Contrivers of *Hypotheses* have been too hasty in framing them without a sufficient number of Experiments ; from whence we may conclude, that if Men will first content themselves to make Experiments in order to give a true History of the *Phænomena* of Nature, before they attempt to solve them upon their own Principles, the World will have an end before any complete System can be contrived to give any tolerable Account of them.

I will conclude this Chapter in the Words, with which Mr. *Huygens* concludes his Conjectures concerning the Planetary Worlds. *For my part, says he, I shall be very well contented, and shall count I have done a great matter, if I can but come to any knowledge of the Nature of things as they now are, never troubling my head about their Beginning, or how they were made, knowing That to be out of the Reach of Humane Knowledge, or even Conjecture.*



C H A P. X.

Of other Habitable Worlds besides this Earth.

THose who think that there must be other Worlds inhabited besides this Earth, where we dwell, or that else the Planets would be useless, and the Stars, which are like so many Suns, would shine to little purpose, do not consider, that

I. It is as easy for Omnipotence to make a Planet or Star, as it is to make the least thing in Nature.

II. The Glory of God Almighty in manifesting his Power and Wisdom, by making and preserving such vast Bodies in their several Orbs and Motions may be a sufficient Reason for their Creation, tho' his Wisdom should see it fit not to have them inhabited. For tho' every thing be equally easy for God to perform, yet

yet Men are apt to admire the Works of this kind most. They employ the Wits of many Men in all Ages to consider their End and Nature, and to calculate their Distances and Motions, whose Curiosity might otherwise be very ill employed: there are some Genius's design'd, as it were, for these Studies, and they would want Matter to work upon without such Objects. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work*, Psal. xix. 1. This expresses the general sense of Mankind, and is the Voice, as it were, of Nature it self, as well as the Word of God. ^a *Anaxagoras* said, he was sent into the World to contemplate the heavenly Bodies, and ^b *Pythagoras* said the same thing: And the contemplation of them has contributed more than any one thing in Nature besides, to preserve a sense of Religion among Heathens. And the ^c best and wisest of them thought, that they could never enough extol the Beauty, and Usefulness, and wondrous Excellency of these Bodies. And these Parts of Nature which are so beneficial, and afford such satisfaction to Mankind in general, may fully answer all the Ends needful in their Creation, tho' they should not be designed for such farther Uses, as some modern Philosophers have contrived for them.

III. As the *Satellites* of *Jupiter* and *Saturn*, and many of the fix'd Stars were not discovered, till the In-

^a Diog. Laert.

^b Iambl. vit. Pythag. l. ii. c. 9.

^c *Celos & erectos constituit* (homines Deus) ut *Deorum cognitionem, cælum intuentes, capere possent. Sunt enim à terrâ homines, non ut incolæ atque habitatores, sed quasi spectatores superarum rerum atque cælestium, quarum spectaculum ad nullum aliud genus Animantium pertinet.* Cic. De Nat. Deor. l. 2. §. 140. Jam verò circuitus Solis & Luna, reliquorumque siderum, quanquam etiam ad Mundi coherentiam pertinent, tamen & spectaculum hominibus præbent. Nulla est enim insatiabilior species, nulla pulchrior, & ad rationem solertiâque præstantior: eorum enim cursus demetiti maturitates Temporum, & varietates, mutationesque cognovimus. Ib. §. 155.

vention of Telescopes; so there are admirable Marks of Wisdom in many other Parts of Nature, which were never known till of late, and never could have been discovered, but by the help of Microscopes. But Men are not the only Creatures, which are capable of praising and magnifying God for his wonderful Works: Angels, who know them more perfectly, do it much more; and they have need of no artificial Instruments to make Discoveries of the Divine Wisdom and Power.

IV. The Stars may be of great benefit and usefulness in the World, tho' they neither have that Influence which Astrologers vainly suppose, nor are as Suns to other Earths: For they serve to keep the circumjacent Air or *Æther* in Motion, which otherwise would congeal or stagnate; and to maintain that perpetual Circulation of Fluid Matter, which passes from Orb to Orb, through the Universe, and gives Life to all Things. It is now held, that the Rays of Light never returning to their Fountain, the Heat, and Light, and Bulk of the Sun, and Fix'd Stars, constantly decrease; tho' the Decrease is so very inconsiderable, that it is believed to be demonstrable, *that if all the Fluid, which the Sun loses in a Year, were brought into a solid Form, it would not equal a grain of Sand.* This must needs appear incredible to any one, who considers the prodigious efflux of Light from the Sun continually, in every point of space. And is it not evident, that the Planets, by Reflexion, return their Light to the Sun, and that there is a constant mutual communication of Light between the Sun and the Fix'd Stars? And therefore, by both these ways, why may there not be a constant supply of luminous Matter, in proportion to that which is emitted? For tho' the Planets do not return so much as they receive; yet as this loss would be small, so it may be made up by the Light transmitted to the Sun from the Fix'd Stars; for if most, or many of the Stars, should have

no Planets in their Orbits, tho' the Sun should return to them as much Light as he receives from them, yet a constant circulation of luminous Matter may be maintained with little diminution. And whatever the diminution be, it may be supplied by the Matter, which must be attracted by so vast Bodies as the Sun and Stars are, and become immediately inflamed and added to the Mass of Light.

V. Tho' this Earth be but small, in comparison of the ambient Heavens, yet the Inhabitants of it, from the beginning of the World to this time, have been exceeding numerous, and may be still vastly more numerous before the end of it. And we must consider the Earth, not as it is at one particular Time, but as it is the Seat of Mankind, and the Habitation of all Generations for all Successions of Ages. And under this Notion, the Earth is no such contemptible place, tho' it be very small, in respect of the Heavens that surround it. Nor is it strange that the material World, how capacious soever it be, should be made for Mankind, to whom the Angels are *Ministring Spirits*, and for whom the Son of God himself was pleased to die.

VI. There are few or none of the Planets, but what by reason of their too near or too remote distance from the Sun, seem incapable of being inhabited. M. *Huygens* in his *Conjectures concerning the Planetary Worlds*, says, that this ^d Water of our Earth would in *Saturn* and *Jupiter* be frozen up immediately, and in *Venus* and *Mercury* it would be evaporated; and he concludes, that every Planet must have its *Waters* of such a Temper, as to be proportioned to its Heat; *Jupiter's* and *Saturn's* must be of such a Nature, as not to be liable to Frost, and *Venus's* and *Mercury's* of such, as not to be easily evaporated by the Sun. He says, ^e That the Heat of the Sun is nine

^dLib. i.

^e Lib. ii.

times greater in *Mercury* than with us; in *Venus* it is twice as hot as with us, the Light and Heat in *Mars* is twice, and sometimes threefold less than ours. If there were any Inhabitants in *Jupiter*, they would have but the five and twentieth part of the Light and Heat that we receive from the Sun, and those in *Saturn* but the hundredth part. Upon which account, he is very hard put to it to furnish out Inhabitants for the rest of the Planets: but as for the Moon and the *Satellites* moving about *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, he does as good as give up the Cause, by reason that they have neither Seas, nor Rivers, nor Clouds, nor Atmosphere or Vapours, nor any kind of *Water*. Besides, that the time of Light and Darkness in the Moon being equal to fifteen of our Days, if the Bodies of the Inhabitants were such as ours are, he observes, that those who had the Sun pretty high in their Horizon, must be like to be burnt up in such long days, and those that liv'd under the Poles of the Moon, would be as much pinch'd with Cold, as our *Whale-fishers* are about *Iseland*, and *Nova Zembla*, in the Summer-time. And the Summer and Winter in the Moons or *Satellites* of *Saturn*, are fifteen Years long; and therefore they may well be concluded to be uninhabitable.

But because it may be alledg'd, that the same thing was believed of the Frigid and Torrid Zones, before Experience convinced Men of their mistake; and that, however, there may be other Planets or Earths yet undiscovered, at convenient distances from some of the Fix'd Stars: I observe, that tho' it should be granted, that some Planets be habitable, it doth not therefore follow, that they must be actually inhabited, or that ever they have been. For they might be design'd, if Mankind had continued in Innocency, as Places for Colonies to remove Men to, as the World should have encreased, either in Reward to those that had excell'd in Vertue and Piety, to entertain them with the Prospect of new and better Worlds; and so
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by degrees, to advance them in proportion to their Deserts, to the height of Bliss and Glory in Heaven; or as a necessary Reception for Men (who would then have been immortal) after the Earth had been full of Inhabitants. For as the Fruit of the Tree of Life was designed for *Adam*, if he had kept his State of Innocence, which he was not suffered to taste of after his Fall: And as God designed that Men should have been immortal, if they had not sinned, and that the Earth should have continued as it was at first created, without either the Curse which was denounced for the Transgression of our first Parents, or the Flood, which destroyed the old World; tho' he foresaw both the Fall, and the future degeneracy of Mankind: so he might have designed the Planets for these uses, if Men had retained their Integrity, tho' he certainly knew, that they would not retain it. And since the Fall and Mortality of Mankind, they may be either for Mansions of the Righteous, or places of Punishment for the Wicked, after the Resurrection, according as it shall please God, at the end of this World, to new-modifie and transform them. And in the mean time, being placed at their respective distances, they do by their several Motions contribute to keep the World at a Poise, and the several Parts of it at an *Æquilibrium* in their Gravitation upon each other, by Sir *Isaac Newton's* Principles. According to his Principles likewise of Attraction and Gravitation, the conjunction and opposition of the Planets, must have some effect upon our Earth, and upon each other, tho' not possible perhaps to be reduced to any certain Rules of Observation. It is acknowledged, that Comets cannot be habitable by reason of the prodigious Heat which they contract by approaching the Sun; and yet, what Uses with any certainty have been assigned them? It seems to be, of late, agreed by Philosophers, that the vast Quantity of Moisture in the Atmosphere of Comets, must cause Changes in our Air; but they are of different

rent Opinions, whether this be for the better or for the worse. And indeed, they may be a natural Means in the hand of Providence, of bestowing Blessings, or inflicting Punishments: And if Planets may serve the same ends without being made Places of Habitation, there is no reason to conclude, that they are inhabited. And besides other Uses, which may be found out hereafter, one very considerable has been already made of the *Satellites*, for the benefit of the World, in rectifying Geography, and determining the Longitude of Places. ^e *M. Cassini* has drawn up Tables for this purpose, and written a Treatise on the Subject. And the ^f *Missionaries*, by their Observations, have discovered, that the Empire of *China* is Five hundred Leagues nearer *Europe*, than *Geographers* have placed it.

VII. It has been suggested by ^g Learned Men, that the Planets may possibly be inhabited by rational Creatures of a different nature from Mankind; their Souls may be of an inferior or superior Order to ours, and their Bodies of a different Form and Composition, and there may be different Laws of Union and Communication between the Operations of their Souls and the Motions of their Bodies: For there is no necessity to believe, that there can be no sort of rational Animals but Mankind.

But I offer most of what I have said on this Subject, only as Conjectures, which have at least so much probability in them, as to silence the Objections brought against the Scriptures on these Accounts. For unless a Man can prove these or the like Conjectures false, which I am persuaded no Man can ever do, he must forbear urging Objections that will be insignificant, if these Conjectures, or such as these, should be true. It is as hard to assign every particular End

^e *Philos. Burgund. Tom. 5. c. 8. Differt.*

^f *Le Comptes Memoirs*, p. 15. and 505.

^g *Cusanus, Campanella, Bp. Wilkins, Huygens, &c.*

and Use of many other wonderful Things in Nature, but lately discovered by Microscopes, as of any thing observable in the Heavens, either by the naked Eye, or by Telescopes, And when the Scriptures mention those Uses of the heavenly Bodies, which more immediately concern our Earth, this doth not deny or exclude any other Uses, for which they may be design'd.

C H A P. XI.

That there is nothing in the Scriptures which contradicts the late Discoveries in Natural Philosophy.

I. **I**T has been well observed by divers Writers upon this Subject, that the Scriptures were written with no design of teaching us Natural Philosophy, but to instruct us in the Knowledge of God, and of our selves; to teach us our Duty, and shew us the way to live and die well: and therefore they might make use of popular Expressions and Forms of Speech, neither affirming nor denying the Philosophical Truth of them, but intending them only in that Sense and Meaning, which was their sole design in using them. All proverbial Sayings, and metaphorical Expressions, by way of Illustration or Ornament, must be taken from received Notions; but they are not therefore asserted in the Philosophical Sense by him who useth them, any more than the Historical Truth of Parables and Similitudes is supposed to be asserted. And to have made use only of Philosophical Terms and Notions, and have rectified the vulgar Conceptions of Men concerning all the *Phænomena*, which upon occasion are made mention of in the Scriptures, would have required a large System of Philosophy, which

had made the Scriptures a Book unfit for vulgar Capacities, and for the use of the greatest part of those for whom they are designed. This Theory of Nature would besides, have seemed as strange and incredible to most Men, even as Miracles can do. For there is hardly any thing that Men unacquainted with Philosophy, are more startled at than Philosophical Discoveries. How incredible doth the Motion of the Earth, and the Rest of the Sun, seem to all Men but Philosophers? who are generally now agreed in it, whilst the Rising and Setting of the Sun, are Expressions now as much in use with such as hold the Earth's Motion, as with others: And indeed they must speak so, if they will be understood; and excepting this one Instance, which is and ever will be in use according to the vulgar Conception in all Countries and Languages, notwithstanding any Philosophical Discoveries; I know nothing in the Scriptures, which is not consistent with the present Notions of Philosophy.

II. And yet that place of Scripture, which is most objected on this Occasion, is so express'd, as that no Advantage can be taken against it. *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon,* Josh. x. 12. Stand thou still, or as we read in the Margin, Be thou *silent*; be still, do not interrupt our Victories, and take part with the Enemy, by withdrawing thy Light, and favouring his Escape. And again, *ver. 13. The Sun stood still* (or was silent) *and the Moon staid*; where the Word applied to the Moon, signifies properly to stay or stand still; but the Word used concerning the Sun is metaphorical, as if it had been purposely so ordered, because the Moon moves, but the Sun only seems to do so: which is farther confirmed by the following part of the same *Verse*, where, in the Citation from the Book of *Jasher*, the same Word is used of the Sun, which was before used of the Moon, signifying that the Sun properly stood still. For the Book of *Jasher* is cited in its own words; but

but when *Joshua*, who wrote by Inspiration, set down the words of the Holy Spirit, he express'd the thing so, that it cannot be from thence inferr'd, that the Sun must be suppos'd to move, but rather the contrary; tho' immediately after, in a Citation from another Book, he inserts the Expression of an Author, who had follow'd the vulgar Opinion. However, as some have observ'd, the Motion of the Earth being caus'd by the Sun's Motion upon his own Axis, this Motion of the Sun might for that time cease, and thereby both the Sun and the Earth, as well as the Moon might stand still. The same Word which *Joshua* us'd, is translated to *wait upon*, and *wait for*, Psal. lxii. i. lxxv. i. So that all which can be concluded from the Word is, that the Sun attended, he lengthned the Day, and waited for the Victory, or waited upon the Army of *Israel*.

III. *Gen. i. 6. And God said, Let there be a Firmament in the midst of the Waters.* The Word translated *Firmament* is in the Margin rendered *Expansion*, by which seems to be meant this Orb, in which the Earth is placed, and by the Waters *above the Firmament* or *Expansion*, may be meant the Waters beyond the Circumference of our Orb, and belonging to the Planets; and by the Waters *under the Firmament*, may be understood the Waters belonging to the Earth, and contain'd within its Expansion. For at first all was one confus'd Heap of Waters, without any Distinction of Orbs: the Mass of Waters being extended throughout, before the several Orbs were appointed; but then the Waters belonging to each Orb were caus'd to subside towards their several Centers, till they being gather'd together in their proper Channels and Receptacles, the dry Land appear'd.

I confess I once thought this had been only an Explication of my own, but I have since found, that it is of equal Date with the Modern Philosophy, and that it has likewise been lately used by others. In-

deed it seems to be so easy an Exposition, that I believe it would come into most Mens Minds, who would consider how this Text may be explain'd according to the New Philosophy. Others suppose the *Firmament* to signifie only the Region of the Air, and by the Waters *above the Firmament*, they understand the Vapours contain'd in the Clouds. *When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of Waters in the Heavens, and he causeth the Vapours to ascend from the ends of the Earth*, Jer. x. 13.

IV. The Sun and Moon are call'd *Two great Lights*, Gen. i. 16. But this doth not imply that either of them is greater than the fix'd Stars, which are not spoken of till the latter end of the Verse. But the Sun is the *great Light that rules the day*, and the Moon the *great Light that rules the night*, the Moon being in respect of the Light which she gives us, bigger than any fix'd Star; for she gives us more Light than they do: In some Sense, however, and with respect to us, the Moon is the greater Light, though the Stars are the greater Luminous Bodies, and are call'd *great Lights*, *Psal. cxxxvi. 7, 9.* Consider this Luminary, as it concerns us, and it is in that conception greater than the biggest Star. Yet the Sun and the Moon are not said to be greater Lights than the fix'd Stars, nor as great as they are; but are only called great Lights, which they certainly are, though every Star should be bigger than either of them. The Stars are plainly spoken of by themselves, and apart from the Sun and Moon, without any Comparison or Relation to them. *And God made two great Lights, the greater Light to rule the Day, and the lesser Light to rule the Night: He made the Stars also:* That is, besides the two great Lights, which are the Sun and Moon, he made the Stars, which are distinguish'd from these, and not reckon'd with them, but are spoken of by way of Parenthesis. The Stars being of another Division of Celestial Bodies, and belonging to other Orbs, are
mention'd

mention'd here distinctly, and not with any Comparison to the Sun and Moon : But will any Man deny that the Sun and Moon are great Lights, because the Stars are great Lights too, and as big perhaps as the Sun, and bigger than the Moon ? There are in *Europe* many great Cities, and there are great Cities likewise in other parts of the World : Doth therefore he that says there are Great Cities in *Europe* to rule the Neighbouring Countries, and Cities in other parts of the World, also say, That the Cities of *Europe* are greater than any Cities in the rest of the World ? Or if any one should say, God made four great Rivers to water Paradise, and Rivers in other places also, would he thereby affirm, that the Rivers of Paradise were larger than all the Rivers in the World besides ?

V. 1 *Sam.* ii. 8. We read of the *Pillars of the Earth*; but this is spoken metaphorically, and by Pillars of the Earth may be meant the Power of the Princes of the World, mention'd but just before. In the like sense it is said, *Psal.* lxxv. 3. *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.* ^a *Maimonides* styles *Abraham* the Pillar of the World; and the ^b *Humble and Poor in Spirit* are by the Jews said to support the World. We find mention made of the Pillars of the Earth, *Job* ix. 6. which is to be understood of the Earth's unmoveable Stability, ^c as *St. Jerom* observes, and so the other Texts may likewise be understood. *Thou hast established the earth and it abideth*, (*Psal.* cxix. 90.) or, as in the *Hebrew*, it *standeth*; and to express the durable Firmness of the Earth the more emphatically, it is said to stand upon

^a De Idololatr. §. v. c. i.

^b Quest. in Lib. Reg. inter Hieron. Opera, ad 1 *Sam.* i. 16.

^c *Columnas hoc loco pro stabilitate terra intelligamus, quam Deus super semetipsam immobilissimâ mole fundavit.* S. Hieron. ad *Job* ix. 6.

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Pillars. By the Pillars of the Heavens, *Job* xxvi. 11. we are to understand that Power which supports and upholds them. *God laid the foundation of the earth, that it should not be remov'd for ever*, *Psal.* civ. 5. but all the parts should continue compacted together, resting upon the Center. It is said of all the Works of God, that they *stand fast*, or are established, *for ever and ever*, *Psal.* cxi. 8.

VI. *Job* xxxvii. 18. The Sky is said to be *strong*, and as a *Molten Looking-glass*, that is, to be durable; and resembling a molten Looking-glass. Looking-glasses in ancient times being made of Brasses, or other Metal, *Exod.* xxxviii. 8. But however they be taken, these are the Words of *Elihu*: And *Job's* Friends sin'd in what they charg'd him withal; and therefore he may be supposed to make so innocent a mistake, as to think the Heavens solid, or at least, he as well as the rest might speak the Language of those that did think so.

VII. *Job* speaks strictly according to Philosophy, when he saith, *that God hangeth the Earth upon Nothing*, *Job* xxvi. 7. And we read, *Psal.* xxiv. 2. that the Lord *hath founded the Earth upon the Seas, and established it upon the Floods*, and, *Psal.* civ. 5. that he *hath laid the Foundations of the Earth, that it should not be removed for ever*. All which is as exactly express'd as any Philosopher can speak. For the Foundation of a pendulous Globe can be nothing but its Center, upon which all the parts lean and are supported thereby. And the Waters continually flowing through the Bowels and Concavities of the Earth from the Depths of the Sea, by a constant Course and Circulation, constitute an Abyss of Waters in the lowermost parts of the Earth. *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again*, *Eccles.* i. 7. So that with great Propriety of Speech, the Terraqueous Globe is said to hang upon nothing, and the Earth to be founded upon the Seas,

Seas, and established upon the Floods, and, *Psal.* cxxxvi. 6. *to be stretched out above the Waters.*

These are the places of Scripture, which as far as I have observ'd, have been most excepted against in this particular; and yet there is nothing in them but what may be accounted for upon the Principles of Modern Philosophy.

As to the Universal Deluge, concerning which so much has been written to reduce it to Notions of Philosophy; it was undoubtedly miraculous, and therefore no more to be accounted for by any Hypothesis in Philosophy than the Creation it self: But if by the Divine Power the ^d Center of Gravitation was removed for a time towards the middle of the then inhabited parts of the World: a change of its place, but the two thousandth part of the Radius of this Globe, were sufficient to bury the tops of the highest Hills under Water. This is as far as Philosophy can go, to say, Thus it may have been, if it pleased God to bring the Deluge upon the Earth by this means, rather than by infinite others, which are all equally in his Power. And thus far Philosophy bears Testimony to the Word of God.



C H A P. XII.

Of Man's being created capable of Sin and Damnation.

IT is sufficient to prove the Reasonableness of God's Proceedings with Mankind, if none are punish'd, but those that deserve Punishment, and none punish'd more than they deserve; and all are rewarded, who by a faithful and sincere, though but a very imperfect

^d Misc. Curios. Vol. i. *Discourse concerning Gravity*; by Mr. Halley.

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Obedience are become qualify'd for a Reward. God can do nothing but what is perfectly just, and infinitely merciful ; and we must be very unreasonable, if we cavil at his Proceedings, which are consistent not only with Justice and Equity, but with Mercy itself. For where neither his Justice, nor his Mercy and Goodness interpose, we must surely acquiesce in the Divine Pleasure, unless we can think that God himself should be more confin'd in his Actions than Men are: For within the Limits of Justice and Mercy, it is certainly left at the liberty of every Man in any Office or Authority, to do as he thinks fit. Yet as God is pleas'd in his dealings with Men, to appeal to their own Reason for the Equity of them, so there is nothing in all his Proceedings with us, but what may be made appear to be more reasonable, even according to the Notion that we have of things, than the contrary would have been.

It must be consider'd, that no created Being can, in its own Nature, be incapable of Sin or Default: Because it cannot be infinitely perfect ; for it is inseparable from all Creatures to have but finite Perfections; and whatever has Bounds set to its Perfections, is in some respect imperfect, that is, it wants those Perfections, which a Being of infinite Perfections alone can have. So that Imperfection is imply'd in the very Essence of created Beings, and what is imperfect may make Default. All inanimate things may deviate from the regular Course of their Natures, as they would certainly do, if the Divine Wisdom and Power did not guide and maintain them in it.

And every rational Being must naturally have a liberty of Choice, that is, it must have a Will to chuse, as well as an Understanding to reason : For we have no Notion how there can be Reason without Choice. A Faculty of Understanding without a Will to determine it, if left to itself, must always think of the same Object, or proceed in a continued Series and
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Connexion of Thoughts, without any Aim or End, which would be a perpetual Labour in vain, and tedious Thoughtfulness to no purpose: but, if it should be sometimes determined by something External to new Objects, yet, what Use of Reason could there be in Contemplations, which were merely obtruded and forced upon the Mind?

And because rational Creatures must have some prescribed Rule of their Actions, from which being free Agents, they may depart; they must by their own Nature be capable of Sin. God is infinite Perfection, and therefore is a Rule to himself, and his Essence is incapable of any other Rule of his Actions; he only acts according to his Essence, from which it is impossible for him to vary. But the most perfect Creatures must act by a Rule, which is not essential to them, but prescribed them by God, and is not so intrinsic to their Natures, but that they may decline from it, for a Free Agent may follow or not follow the Rule appointed, or else it would not be free.

The Difficulty therefore is not, why Man was created capable of Sinning; for he could not possibly by his Creation and in his Nature be incapable of it; this is peculiar to God, who is infinite Perfection, that all Sin should be a Contradiction to his very Nature and Essence. But the Question which has been started by some Men, if they state it right, must be this, How it came to pass, that God did not sustain and preserve Men by an irresistible Power from falling into Sin, when Damnation was to be the Consequence of it? In answer to which, it might suffice to say, that in the Creation God must be supposed to act by His Divine Prerogative, and by His arbitrary Will and Power; *He giveth not account of any of his Matters*, Job xxxiii. 13. but it is enough for us to know, that he made Man happy, and capable of continuing happy, and that there could be no necessity, why he should force him to continue so. Though we
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want not in the mean time Reasons to prove, even to our weak and imperfect Understandings, that it was expedient that the Happiness or Misery of Man should depend upon his own Choice, rather than that he should be kept unavoidably from all Sin, and be placed out of all possibility of Punishment and Misery. I. Because the Glory of God is hereby more advanc'd, and all the Attributes of his Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness are more display'd, than if Men had been inevitably restrain'd from sinning. II. Because this conduceth more to the Happiness of the Blessed, than a Necessity of not sinning could have done.

I. The Glory of God is more advanced, and the Attributes of his Wisdom and his Justice, and of his Goodness it self are more display'd by leaving Men to a Freedom of acting, than they could have been by imposing an inevitable Fate and Necessity of not sinning upon Mankind. It is for the Glory of God to be obey'd by his Creatures acting according to their Natural Powers and Capacities, rather than to create them with a Faculty, which would never have been enjoy'd, but would have always been under such a Restraint upon Humane Nature, as must have been, if Men had never been suffer'd to have any Use or Trial of their Freedom of Will. And unless Man had been left capable of sinning against God, he could not have been in a Capacity of paying him a true and proper Obedience: for Obedience supposeth Choice, and Choice supposeth a Possibility of Disobedience. To obey God in proper speaking, is to chuse to do what God has commanded, to submit to his Will, and to resolve to do what we know to be pleasing to Him, upon that very Reason and Consideration, because we know it to be His Pleasure; not because the Necessity of our own Nature, or some over-ruling Power forceth us upon it. The Obedience of Rational Creatures, supposing them from their first Creation out of all possibility of sinning, would be no other, than that
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of the irrational and inanimate Beings, and a Man then could be no more truly said to obey God in acting as God has appointed, than a Stone may be said to obey him in falling downward, or the Fire in ascending: These act according to God's Appointment, and so would Man, if he acted upon Necessity; but it is an Honour and Homage due to God from rational Creatures, that they should determine themselves to do as he has commanded, and make a free Acknowledgment of his Bounty and Goodness, and pay a voluntary Submission to the Divine Authority, which is their *reasonable Service*.

The Wisdom of God is, and will be especially at the Day of Judgment, more conspicuous by the Government of a wicked World, than it would have been, if all Men had been forcibly kept from doing wickedly. To restrain the Passions, and over-rule all the Vices of Men, and set bounds to them; to bring Good out of Evil, and by unexpected ways and methods to lead Men to repentance, and to appoint and bring to pass the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, by which the Treasures and Mysteries of the Divine Wisdom are reveal'd, and such things are discover'd, as even the Angels themselves *desire to look into*, (1 Pet. i. 12.) this magnifies the Wisdom of God much more than the State of Men uncapable of Sin could have done. There is much more Wisdom shewn in governing Free Agents, than in governing by Fate and Necessity; and more Wisdom in making the worst Actions as instrumental and serviceable to the purposes of Holiness and Goodness, as the best could have been, than in not suffering them to be; and more in redeeming Man, than in keeping him by force in such a condition, as to stand in no need of Redemption.

All the Divine Attributes are much more magnified by the Incarnation of the Son of God for the Redemption of Man, than they could have been, if he had never fallen: The Love of God is manifested in
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a more wonderful manner, by sending his own Son to die for us: his Justice in requiring Satisfaction, and his Wisdom, and Truth, and Faithfulness, in recovering Man from his miserable Condition, and perfecting the Design of his Creation, in despite of his Disobedience.

It is the Mercy of God to save them that are saved; but his Justice is executed only upon the Wicked; and why should we think it reasonable, that God should debar himself the Exercise of one of his Attributes rather than punish such Men, as thro' their own Obstinacy will perish? Justice is as much a Perfection of God as Mercy is; and tho' it may seem terrible to us, yet it is as reasonable in it self, that wicked Men should perish, as that the righteous should be saved: And God acts upon Principles of infinite Reason and Wisdom, without any mixture of Passion. Therefore I demand, Is it reasonable or not, that the Wicked should suffer? And if it be, why should not God act according to his own Attributes, and the true Reasons of Things, rather than by our weak and fond Passions? Since there is infinite Wisdom, and Justice, and Mercy, in God's Proceedings, it cannot be conceived, why the Ruine which many Men will bring upon themselves, should either alter or hinder the Divine Counsels and Decrees.

II. A freedom of Choice conduceth more to the Happiness of the Blessed, than a necessity of not sinning could have done. The Happiness of Heaven consists in the Love and Enjoyment of God: but Love is never so great, nor so sensible an Happiness, as when there has been some Tryal and Experience in the proof of it. And it must advance the Happiness both of Angels and Men in Heaven, that upon choice and tryal, they have prefer'd God before all things, and upon that, find themselves confirm'd and establish'd in the perpetual and unalterable love and enjoyment of him. This very consideration, that they might
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once have fallen from his Love, inspires them with the highest Ardors of Love, when they rejoyce in the infinite Rewards of so easie and short a Tryal: and the Reflection upon the Dangers escaped, heightens even the Joys of Heaven it self to them, and makes an Addition to every degree of Bliss. The remembrance of their past Sins and Temptations, and the sense of their own Unworthiness arising from that remembrance, will continually excite in the Blessed fresh Acts of Love and Adoration of God, who has raised them above all Sin and Temptation, and fix'd them in an everlasting State of Bliss and Glory. The Tryal that the Righteous underwent here, makes up some part of their Happiness in Heaven; and in what degree soever their Happiness can be supposed to be, yet it is in some measure encreased, and, as it were, endeared to them, by reflecting upon their former State of Tryal, in which they were subject to Temptation and Sin.

The Love, and Praises, and Adorations of the Father, for sending his Son, and accepting his Ransom; of the Son, as our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; and of the Holy Ghost, as our Guide and Conductor to Heaven; must suppose, that we needed a Ransom and a Redeemer, and the Grace and Influence of the Holy Ghost; that is, we must have been capable of Sin and Misery, or else we had wanted these Motives to the Love of God, which the Dispensation of the Gospel affords, and which will make up the Happiness of Heaven to us. Creatures cannot comprehend the Divine Essence, but they know and love God, according as he manifests himself to them; and therefore that Dispensation, which doth most manifest the Love, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, doth most conduce to the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Men. The Blessed shall see God *face to face*, they shall enjoy his Presence, and partake of his Glory, and in this their Happiness will consist; but the Love of God
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is not only the necessary consequence of this Beatifick Vision, but it is antecedently necessary to qualifie us for it; and the more any Soul is inflamed with the Divine Love, the fuller and more perfect Vision of God we must suppose it to enjoy. But Goodness is the Object of our Love, and not Goodness in the Idea so much, as Goodness extended to us: And as God's Goodness is more manifested in sending his Son to atone for our Sins, than it could have been by exempting us from all possibility of Sinning; so our Love to him must be more strongly excited, whereby the Soul is dilated, as it were, and made more receptive of the Communications of the Divine Essence in the Beatifick Vision. As Faith is *made perfect by Works* proceeding from Love in this Life, and without Charity is nothing worth; so in the other World, where Faith shall be swallowed up in Vision, Love must be that Power or Quality in the Soul, whereby we become capable of receiving the Divine Communications, and the more extensive and boundless this is, the more happy we shall be; and therefore, whatever is most conducing to advance the Love of God in us, is the best means of our Salvation and future Happiness. Our Love towards God, excited and advanced by the manifestation of his Love to us, can alone capacitate us for the Beatifick Vision; and this Vision consists in discerning and contemplating the Mysteries of God's Love, whereby the Love of the Blessed must be raised to all possible degrees of ardency towards him.

The Motives which the Christian Religion affords us, to the Praise and Love of God, will accompany us for ever to augment and improve the Happiness, even of Heaven it self, where *Charity never fails*: and it is not conceivable, how the Divine Love could have been so fully manifested, and set forth to us so gloriously, if Man had never fallen, but by representing to him the danger of his Fall, and the gracious design of God towards him, supposing he had fallen. To have

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have escaped Hell, and to find our selves in the unchangeable possession of Salvation by the free Mercy and Goodness of God, and by the Death of his own Son, are Thoughts which must create a new Heaven, as it were, in Heaven it self; I mean, they will enlarge our Souls to the utmost capacities of our Natures, and fill and actuate them with such Divine Ardors of Love, as if we had been kept necessarily from all Sin, seem impossible to have been raised in us. The Angels themselves *rejoice over one Sinner that repenteth*, and that Joy must have been wanting to them, who are of so much higher and more excellent a Nature than we are of, if there had been no possibility either of Sin, or of Repentance. And the wonderful Dispensation of the Gospel is an eternal Subject of Praise and Adoration, an eternal Fountain of Love, and Joy, and Happiness to all the Blessed Spirits in Heaven.

The more the Divine Attributes are displayed, the more adorable the Majesty of God will appear, and will become the greater Object of our Praise and Veneration; those that are wise and good, will be made the wiser and better by it, and the happier in the Contemplation of the Divine Perfections, and in the sense and experience, that they have been all continually employed for their benefit, that the most unlikely Accidents have constantly tended to the Advantage of them that love God, *and all things have worked together for their good*. Now a Governour in his Laws, and in the Method and Order of his Government, has regard chiefly to the Good and Obedient, and has little concern for the rest. And we must consider God not only as the Father, but as the Governour of Mankind; and tho' an earthly Father, perhaps, would by all means possible, preserve his Son from incurring Punishment, yet a good Governour, when the Ends of his Government can be better obtain'd by leaving him to his liberty, would not restrain him by any Force or Violence. Therefore, if the liberty of choice in Men,

and the possibility of their Sin and Damnation be for the Glory of God, and for the benefit of good Men, and be no Injury to the bad; this is a sufficient Account, why Man was not necessarily restrained from Sinning, tho' Damnation be the consequence of it.



C H A P. XIII.

Of the Fall of the Angels, and of our First Parents.

IN the Beginning God created every thing perfect in its kind, and endued the Angels and Man with all intellectual and moral Perfections suitable to their respective Natures: but so as to leave them capable of sinning. For it pleased the infinite Wisdom of God (for the Reasons already alledg'd, and for many more, and greater Reasons perhaps than any Man is able to imagine) to place them in a state of Tryal, and to put it to their own choice, whether they would stand in their present condition of Innocence and Happiness, in which they were created, or fall into Sin and Misery. We have little or no account in the Scriptures of the Cause or Temptation, which occasioned the Fall of Angels, because it doth not concern us to be acquainted with it; and therefore, it little becomes us to be inquisitive about it. Indeed, it is very difficult to conceive, how Beings of so great Knowledge and Purity, as the Fallen Angels once were of, should fall into Sin: But it must be considered, that nothing is more unaccountable than the Motives and Causes of Action in Free Agents: when any Being is at liberty to do as it will, no other Reason of its Actings, besides its own Will, need be enquired for. What is liable to Sin, may sin, whatever the Motive be; and

to enquire after the Motive, is to enquire what Motives may determine a Free Agent, that is, an Agent, which may determine it self upon any Ground or Motive.

But how perfect and excellent soever any Creature is, unless it be so confirmed and established in a state of Purity and Holiness, as to be secured from all possibility of Sinning, it may be supposed to admire it self, and dote upon its own Perfections and Excellencies, and by degrees, to neglect, and not acknowledge God the Author of them, but to sin and rebel against him. And it is most agreeable both to Scripture and Reason, that Pride was the cause of the Fall of Angels. For those Excellencies which might secure them from any other Sin, proved a Temptation to this; and the greater their Perfections were, the greater was the Temptation; as in a Man who is guilty of Spiritual and Pharisaical Pride, all that is good and commendable in him, affords him only matter for his Sin. So that where there is a freedom of Will, and a possibility of Sinning, the very Perfection of Nature in a Creature may be made an occasion to sin; and that which excludes other Sins, may prove a Motive and Temptation to Pride, which therefore we have reason to conclude, was the Sin of the Fallen Angels.

As to the Fall of Man, however the thing may be disputed, the Effects of it are visible in the strange proneness of humane Nature, to act against Reason and Conscience, that is, to act in plain contradiction to it self, and its own Principles. This is a state in which it cannot be supposed that Mankind was at first created by the infinitely Good and Holy God. And the most plausible Opinion, and that which has most generally obtained among the *Heathens*, is, that the Souls of Men had a Being before they came into this World, and were sent into humane Bodies, in punishment for what they had done amiss in a precedent state. But this is mere suspicion and conjecture,

without any possibility of proof; and there is this plain Reason against it, that no Man can be punished for his Amendment, who knows nothing of it. For it is inconsistent with the nature and end of Punishment, that the Offender should not be made sensible of his Fault, especially when the Punishment is designed for his Amendment, as it is said to be in the present case.

It has been the constant Opinion of those Philosophers, who have held a Pre-existence of Souls, that after their departure out of this Life, Men remember what they did here: And if, notwithstanding, it can be supposed, that Men may possibly retain no remembrance of what they did in another state, before this Life, yet if their Faults were not kept in memory, they should be brought to their remembrance, or there should be some authentick Revelation to inform Men, in general terms, that their Condition in this World had respect to a former state, if this Life were designed as a state of Punishment in order to Amendment. But the state of this Life is so far from being thought a Punishment, that Men naturally are of nothing more fond, nor dread any thing more than to leave it. And tho' Men meet with great Afflictions here, yet these do not befall those only or chiefly, who by their proneness to Evil in this Life, might be supposed to have been the greatest Offenders in a former state; and every Calamity has not the nature of Punishment. The Sufferings and Miseries which we endure, by reason of *Adam's* Transgression, are not so properly Punishments as the Effects and Consequences of his Sin: But Personal Faults, such as are supposed to have been committed in a state of Pre-existence, require a proper Punishment; and if the Punishment be for Amendment, as it is supposed to be in this present state, both the Fault and the Punishment must be known, with the Cause and End of its being inflicted; and the greatest Offenders must undergo the severest

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verest Punishment. Besides, if the ^a Soul were put into the Body, as into a Prison, for Punishment, in order to be reclaimed from evil Habits contracted in a former state; how comes it to pass, that the Body concurs with the Soul in sinning? that the Soul is seduced and ensnared by the carnal Appetites? and that the *Flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, causes it to do that which it would not, and to act against the Light and Convictions of its own Reason and Conscience? Men are wont to be restrained from Sin by Punishment, not to be drawn into it; and it is a very improper way of correction for past Sins, to be expos'd to new ones. But the Soul becomes prone to Sin, by being join'd to the Body: it is plain therefore, that the Soul is not sent into the Body to be punish'd for Sins past, and by that means to be restored to that Innocence and Purity, which it lost in a former state.

The Account which the Scripture gives us of the Fall of our First Parents, may be considered, either, 1. in the Manner, or 2. in the Consequences of it.

1. If we consider the *Manner* of the Fall of our First Parents. 1. *Eve* was beguiled by the Serpent, and *Adam* was enticed by her to eat the forbidden Fruit. 2. They both eating of it, thereby fell from their state of Happiness.

1. *Eve* was beguiled by the Serpent, and *Adam* was enticed by her. It is not to be supposed, but that the Devil would use all the means that the subtilty of his Malice could invent, to procure the Ruine of Mankind, and that therefore he would not only make use of inward Suggestions, but of outward Allurements also by a visible Shape and Appearance. And if he had assum'd the shape of a Man or Woman, *Eve* knew

^a Εἰ γὰρ πρὸς κόλασιν τῇ ψυχῇ διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐδόθη τὸ σῶμα, ὥστε αὐτῷ ὀδυνώδη πειρασθῆναι πρὸς τὸ τιμᾶν τὸ θεόν, πῶς σωθήσεται, καὶ (κατασφραγίσθεται) αὐτῇ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν; &c. Justinian. adv. Orig. C. T. 5 Col. 640.

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that there was none of humane kind but *Adam* and her self in the World, and therefore that Shape was least of all proper for him to make use of. But if he had assum'd any other Shape, or made use of any other Creature as his Instrument, the same, or the like Objections might lie against it, that can be suppos'd against his beguiling *Eve* by a Serpent.

The Serpent's Subtilty † which is observ'd by *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, and other Authors, made him the fitter Instrument for the Devil's Purpose, for all finite Agents can act no otherwise than as the matter they have to work withal will permit. It is supposed by a ^b Person of great Learning, that *Eve* was tempted by a fiery flying Serpent, such as are still seen in some Parts of the World, of great Brightness and Splendor, being styled *Seraphims*, Num. xxi. 6, 8. *Isai.* xiv. 29. which is a Name that denotes likewise one of the highest Orders of Angels; and he concludes that this fiery Serpent appear'd to *Eve* in such a shining and beautiful Lustre, as she had seen Angels appear in before, and that it was mistaken by her for an Angel. This Account seems to have the more probability in it, because the *Cherubim* are represented in the Visions of *Ezekiel*, and *St. John*, under the likeness of Animals, *Ezek.* i. *Rev.* iv. But if it should not be admitted, yet we may observe that ordinary Serpents were generally esteem'd Sacred by the Heathens, as it is evident from the *Caduceus* of *Mercury*, and many other instances; the Sight of them was accounted a ^c good Omen, and the ^d *Genii* were painted under the Form of Serpents. It was ^e reported both of *Alexander* and *Scipio*, that they were begotten of *Jupiter* under the

† Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. & Differtat. de Serpente Tentatore.

^b A. Bp. Tenison of Idolatry, Chap. xiv.

^c Val. Max. l. i.

^c 6. Dio. l. xlvii. initio. Vopisc. in Aureliano. Jul. Capit. in Maximin. jun.

^d Pers. Sat. i. Propert. l. iv. Eleg. 8.

^e Liv.

l. xxvi. c. 19.

Shape of a Serpent, and ^f *Æsculapius* is said to have assum'd that Form, when he was transported in the time of a great Plague, from *Epidaurus* to *Rome*. ^g Serpents were had in the greatest Honour, and had Sacrifices made to them in the Worship of *Bacchus*, and a ^h Snake was portray'd round the *Tripes* of *Sibylla Erythraea*. The Story of ⁱ *Ophioneus* among the *Heathens* was taken from the Devil's assuming the Form or Body of a Serpent, in his tempting of *Eve*, and the Hereticks call'd ^k *Ophiteæ* worshipp'd a Serpent: and to name no more instances, Serpents have commonly had Religious Worship paid them both by Ancient and ^l Modern Heathens. And if the Devil has been so generally worshipp'd in the Form of a Serpent since the Fall, it can seem no incredible thing, that he should by a Serpent deceive *Eve*. He seems to have prided himself in this manner of Worship, to insult and trample upon fall'n Mankind, by causing himself to be adored under that very Form, by which he first wrought our Ruin; to which purpose *Clemens Alexandrinus* ^m observes, that in the Feasts of *Bacchus*, they were wont to cry out *E'vav*, meaning, as he supposes, *Eve*. ⁿ *Lucretius* makes *Evan* a Denomination of *Bacchus*. The ^o Serpent was indeed the common Symbol and mystick Representation of the Heathen Deities. We know, that the *Babylonians* worshipp'd a Dragon, from the Apocrypha; and that they had the Images of Serpents in the Temple of *Belus*, from ^p *Diodorus Siculus*. ^q Dragons are describ'd to be of a beautiful

^f Val. Max. l. i. c. 8. Plin. Hist. l. xxix. c. 4.

^g Clem. Alex. Admonit. ad Gentes. Max. Tyr. Dissert. xxxviii.

^h Apud Euseb. Constant. Orat. c. xviii. ⁱ Orig. contr. Cels.

l. vi. & Spenceri not. ad loc. ^k Tertull. Præscript. 37.

^l Jos. Acoft. l. v. c. 5, 12, 13. Martin. Hist. Sin. l. i. & iv.

Bosman of the Coast of Guinea, Lett. xix. ^m Admonit. ad

Gent. ⁿ Lib. v. ^o Justin. Mart. Apol. ad Antonin.

Pium. ^p L. ii. c. 4. ^q Lucan. l. ix.

*Vos quoque, qui cunctis innoxia Numina Terris
Serpitis; aurato nitidi fulgore Dracones.*

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shining Colour; and ^r *Philo* speaking of the Serpent that beguiled *Eve*, calls it a Dragon. It is probable therefore, that she was tempted by one of this kind of Serpents, especially since the Dragon is styled, *that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan*, Rev. xii. 9. However, it can be no impossible thing, that *Eve* should be deceiv'd once by a Creature, by which her Posterity has been deceiv'd, even to the Worship of it in so many Ages and Countries since. The Speech of a Serpent could be no frightful thing to *Eve*, who knew not what Fear was before her Fall; and if it be thought absurd (tho' it was so soon after her own Creation) that she should not know but that other Creatures might have the use of Speech as well as Man: Yet why might not she attribute his Faculty of Speech to the Vertue of that Fruit, which he might be supposed to have tasted, and from his own Experience to recommend to her? So far is it from any Inconsistency or Improbability, that *Eve* should be beguil'd by a Serpent; and when she was once deceiv'd, it will not be deny'd, but that *Adam* might be enticed by her.

2. The Sin committed by our first Parents was in eating the forbidden Fruit, and they both eating of it, fell thereby from their Primitive State of Happiness. The time when our first Parents sinn'd is uncertain, and therefore there is no ground for the Objection, which some have fram'd by crowding a long Series of things into the Business of one Day. Many Circumstances are omitted in the Scriptures, concerning the state of our first Parents in Paradise, and relating to their Fall. For no more is mention'd than was needful to *Moses's* Design, which was to give a very brief Account of the most remarkable things that had past from the Creation to his own Times. It appears that our first Parents were no Strangers to the Presence

and Voice of God, and there is no reason to doubt but that they were fully instructed in the Terms propos'd to them, with the Reasonableness of God's Commandments, how much depended upon their Obedience, what Danger they were in, and how easily they might escape it, and become enstated in everlasting Innocence and Happiness.

God had determin'd to make trial of them by proposing an easy instance of their Obedience, and by forbidding them the use but of one Tree in Paradise: It was but a small Restraint, and they had Ability enough to have overcome the greatest Temptation; and Life and Death were set before them, as the Reward or Punishment of their Obedience or Disobedience. Upon eating the forbidden Fruit, they must *surely die*; but if they had but refrain'd from it, another Tree was provided, the eating of which should as certainly have made them Immortal, as this made them subject to Death: For then without ever undergoing Death, they should have been translated to a state of more perfect Bliss and Happiness.

It cannot be deny'd, but that it was very fitting and reasonable, that God should lay some Restraint upon our first Parents, whereby he might be obey'd, and his Sovereignty acknowledg'd: And as no Law could be more easily observ'd than this, so it was most proper for the place in which they were, and for their manner of Life and state of Innocence. The common Rules and Laws of Morality could then scarce have any place, but it was requisite that this or some such other instance of Obedience, should be imposed. Theft, and Murther, and Adultery, and other Sins against moral Duties, were then either impossible to be committed, or so unnatural, that it can hardly be imagined, how any of them should be committed, when there were yet but two Persons in the World, in a state of perfect Innocence: and therefore in moral Duties there could be no Trial of the Obedience
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of our first Parents ; besides, these were so well known to them, that there could be no need of any Command concerning them. But God gives them a Command in a Thing of an indifferent Nature, that so he might have a plainer Proof of their Obedience, in a thing which was both indifferent of it self, and so easy to them, that nothing but a careless and perverse Neglect could betray them into Disobedience.

To suppose Good and Evil to be in the Nature of Things only, and not in the Commandments and Prohibitions of God, is in effect, a renouncing of God's Authority ; but this Tree was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil : For it made them sensible of the Divine Authority upon which moral Good and Evil formally depend, tho' materially they be in the Nature of things : Whatever God is pleas'd to command or forbid, however indifferent it be in it self, is for that very Reason, so far as it is commanded or forbidden by him, as truly Good or Evil, as if it were absolutely and morally so, being enacted by the same Divine Authority, whereby all moral Precepts become obligatory as Laws to us : For all moral Truths, or Precepts, or Rules of Life, however certain and necessary in themselves, yet receive the Obligation of Laws from the Divine Authority, this being the most certain Truth in Morality, and in Order of Nature antecedent to all others, that God is to be obey'd in all that he commands or forbids. But the Divine Authority was solely and purely concern'd in this Commandment, which had no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but depended merely upon the Will and Pleasure of God, and by the Transgression of this Law, it became notorious to our first Parents and their unhappy Posterity, that both Good and Evil, whatever they may be in Speculation and abstracted Notions, yet as they concern us in the Practice of our Lives, are to be resolv'd ultimately into the Divine Authority ; God is our Law-giver, and nothing can
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be a Law to us but by his enacting, and what he enacts must be a Law to us; and of the same necessary indispensable Obligation, so far as he is pleas'd to enjoin it, whether it be a moral Precept, or only an indifferent thing in its own Nature. It seems then that God was pleas'd to manifest his Sovereign Authority in this Commandment, and to shew that it is absolute and independent upon moral Good or Evil; and that tho' his infinite Holiness and Goodness would not permit him to command any thing contrary to moral Duties, nor suffer him not to command moral Good, and forbid moral Evil; yet his Authority is arbitrary over us, extending as far beyond all the Duties of Morality as he pleases, which indeed are only Truths and Precepts, but not Duties to us but by Vertue of his Authority. This Commandment therefore was given in Assertion of God's Authority, whom it is always and in every thing good to obey, and evil to disobey, as our first Parents found by sad Experience. [†] *Maimonides* observes, that they had the Knowledge of Truth and Falshood before, but Good and Evil became known to them by their Fall, whereby they understood the Value of that Good which they had lost, and were made sensible of the Misery of that Condition, into which they had brought themselves: They perceiv'd how good it was to obey God, and how evil to be disobedient to Him in any thing whatsoever.

[†] Mr. *Mede* has observ'd that their Sin was Sacrilege. God had reserv'd that Tree as holy to himself, in token of his Dominion and Sovereignty, and appointed it to such uses as he had design'd it for: and therefore it was a Sacrilegious Prophanation to eat of it; it was a Theft or Robbery, no less than the *Robbing of God*, as the Prophet styles Sacrilege, and an Invasion of his Right.

[§] *Maim. More Nevoch*, Pt i. c. 2.

[†] *Lib. i. Disc. xxvii.*

And the Lord God said, Behold the Man is become as one of us to know Good and Evil, Gen. iii. 22. which Words are generally supposed to have been spoken by a severe *Sarcasm*, or with an upbraiding Anger and Indignation; but they seem to admit of an easier Sense, if they be thus interpreted; *The man is become as one of us*, he has made himself as one of us; he has assum'd to himself an Equality with us. Christ *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. to be equal is there to claim an Equality; and so to *become as one of us*, is to challenge or pretend to become as one of us, according to the Devil's Suggestion. Christ knew it to be no Injury or Presumption in Himself, who was *in the form of God*, and was God as well as Man, to assume to Himself an Equality with the Father: But our first Parents, who were made *in the image of God* and *after his likeness*, were not contented with this, but affected something higher than the Perfections of a Creature, and aim'd at an independent State of Wisdom and Immortality, being seduced by the Serpent, who said unto the Woman, *Ye shall not surely die; ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*, Gen. iii. 4, 5. This was a most heinous Crime to believe the Serpent rather than God himself, and to be seduced by him, and hope by his Advice to procure to themselves Divine Wisdom and Immortal Happiness. Thus Man apostatiz'd from God, as the Tempter himself had done. And indeed this is what the Words *ver. 22.* as they may be interpreted, will imply. For the Preposition or Particle, which is there rendred *of*, often signifies *from*, and is so rendred by our Translators. ^u *He took from them Simeon*, Gen. xlii. 24. ^x *One went out from me*, Gen. xlii. 28. ^y *Separated you from the congregation*, Num. xvi. 9. In

^u ויקח מאתם את שמעון Gen. xlii. 24.

^x ויצא האחד מאתי Gen. xlii. 28.

^y אֶחָדְכֶם מֵעֵדוּת יִשְׂרָאֵל Numb. xvi. 9.

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like manner, the Man is become as one *from us*, or *from among us*; as one of our heavenly Court and Retinue, who went out from among us, and apostatiz'd from us; that is, he is become like Satan, *to know good and evil*; Good by the want of Innocence, and Evil by the Guilt and Burthen of it, upon his Conscience.

II. The Consequences of the Fall of our first Parents were answerable to their Crime, and were either upon themselves, or upon their Posterity, or upon the Serpent and other Creatures.

I. The Curse upon the Serpent was by a visible Object and Representation, to denote that Curse and Punishment which was denounced against the Tempter himself, who assum'd the Body of a Serpent, and was to be *bruised under our feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. The Serpent before had a freer and stronger Motion, and could lift up himself and reach the Fruits of the Trees, but is since confin'd to the Ground, and is forced to seek his Food in the Dust. And there being Relations of Serpents, which carry part of their Body erect, this before the Curse might belong to the whole kind of them in another manner, than it doth since to any one sort. The Basilisk is said to go with his Head and Breast erect, and a Serpent call'd ^z in Ceylon, the *Noya*, will stand with half his Body upright for two or three hours together. ^a Dragons fly in *Africa*, where they are venomous, ^b but not in other places. ^c These may be for Monuments of the Truth of the Curse upon the rest; as some of the Race of the Giants were left in the Land of *Canaan*, till *David's* time, as a Memorial to the *Israelites* of the miraculous Power of God in the Conquest of the Land by their Forefathers.

^z *Knox's Hist. of Ceyl.* Part i. c. 7. ^a *Lucan.* l. ix. v. 729.

^b *Id. ib. & Plin. Hist.* l. xxix. c. 4.

^c *See Mr. Mede, l. i. Disc.* xli.

The Curse of the Ground was for a Punishment to *Adam* and his Posterity, and can be consider'd no otherwise, nor be made matter of Objection, unless it be thought unreasonable to inflict a Curse upon Mankind for this Offence of eating the forbidden Fruit, by making the Earth less fruitful and pleasant to them. Though the Garden of *Eden* were the most delightful and happy Part of the Earth, yet the whole Earth before the Fall, was very different from what it has been since. For if it had continued as it was, the Curse and Punishment upon Mankind could not have been effected in that manner, in which it was determined.

2. Our First Parents were turned out of Paradise, and not suffered to taste of the Tree of Life. They had been charged not to eat of the Fruit in the midst of the Garden, and threatned with Death, that is, that they should become mortal, and be sure to die, if they would presume to eat of it. Of one, who is under Sentence of Death, without all hope of Pardon, or whose Sickness is beyond all hope of Recovery, we commonly say, *He is a dead Man*: by which we mean, that he can live but a very little time. And when *Adam*, for his Sin, was under Sentence of Death, and had the Signs and Tokens of Death upon him, he might with as much more Reason, be said to be a dead Man, as the Life of *Adam* was shorter, in comparison of the immortal State which he had forfeited, than a Day or Hour is, in respect of the longest Period of human Life. To be subject to Misery both in Body and Mind, so that the Body should decay, and at last be dissolved, and the Soul which could not perish, should be miserable after its separation from the Body, was the original Notion of Death; and our First Parents, who had never seen what natural dying was, understood Death no otherwise than as a privation of Happiness, and consequently a state of Misery both in this Life and the next: The first was unavoidable, the latter to be avoided by Repentance, and

and a future Obedience thro' Faith in God's Mercy for Christ's sake. A state of Damnation is a state of Death; and the Soul which lies under the Divine Wrath, is in that state, tho' it be not irreversibile during this Life. So that the Death threatned being two-fold, *viz.* of the Soul, and of the Body, it was accordingly inflicted on both: But it was not threatned, that this Death should be to the final destruction either of Soul or Body; but thro' the Redemption of Christ, the Body might be recovered from the Death, to which it became subject, to a Blessed and Glorious Resurrection, and the Soul be restored from the Death, into which it had fallen, to a state of Reconciliation and Favour with God.

They were hindred from tasting of that Tree which was to have been the means and instrument of Immortality to them. For God, who has given a Medicinal Vertue and a Power of Nourishment to other Fruits and Herbs, might convey a Power and Influence into this Tree, of rendring Men immortal by preventing the Decays of Nature, and nourishing or strengthening them to an endless Life. How this should have been, we are now no more able to know than to become immortal here upon Earth: But this was God's Decree, that Immortality should be annex'd to the tasting of that Tree, and therefore our First Parents, when they had incurred the Penalty of Death, were not suffered to taste of it, but were forced out of Paradise, and it was just that they should be hindred from enjoying any longer the Delights of Paradise, for the Transgression of a Commandment, which Wantonness only, and a vain and criminal Curiosity, could make them disobey.

We are able to give little more account, how the Food we now eat, can nourish and sustain us from time to time for threescore and ten, or fourscore Years, than how the Fruit of the Tree of Life should have been a preservative to keep Men alive for ever; only
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this we have the Experience of, and so fancy we can tell how it comes to pass; but that is strange to us; and what is strange, Men wonder at, and will hardly believe it. But since God has endued our ordinary Food with a power of Nourishment, no Man can reasonably doubt, but that he might endue this Fruit with such a Vertue, that it should have made Men immortal to taste of it, and have prevented that decay of Nature, which now still creeps upon us in the use of other Food. We may well suppose, that if they had once tasted of this Fruit, they should have suffered no Decay, but have lived in constant Vigour here, tho' partaking afterwards only of other Nourishment, till they had been translated to Heaven. Or it might be design'd, not as a Physical, but a Sacramental Cause of Immortality, that is, as a Sign and Pledge of Immortality; God having decreed, that upon the tasting of this Fruit, *Adam* and his Posterity should have been immortal. But the forbidden Fruit being of a most delicious Taste, as well as *pleasant to the Eyes*, and containing a very fermenting Juice, might put the Blood and Spirits into great disorder, and thereby divest the Soul of that Power and Dominion which it had before over the Body, and by a closer and more intimate Union with Matter, might reduce it to that miserable condition, which has been propagated and derived down to Posterity with the humane Nature from our First Parents; as some Poysons now strangely affect the Nerves and Spirits, without causing immediate Death, but make such Alterations in the Body, as are never to be cured. And it could not be fitting that Man should become immortal in this Condition, or that the Threatning of God, however, should not take place.

From what has been hitherto said upon this Subject, I hope it is evident, that there can be no necessity of running to Allegorical Interpretations to explain the Fall of our First Parents. And indeed, all the rea-

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son that can be given, why it is represented under an Allegory, will rather prove the literal Sense. For if the Simplicity, and the Customs, and manner of Life in the beginning of the World did require, that the Fall of our First Parents should be describ'd under an Allegory of this nature; for the very same reasons we may suppose, that the Fall was in this manner. For what is it which makes it seem improbable, but only its being disagreeable, as some Men conceit, to Reason? But if it be absurd to suppose, that such a thing should have been in the beginning of the World, why is it not as absurd that such a thing should be represented to those, who liv'd at the beginning of the World, as if it had been? If this was then the most fitting and proper representation of the Fall, why was it not the most likely manner for it to happen by? God's Dispensations are always fitted to the Capacities and Circumstances of those, who are most concern'd in them; and the Devil, in his Temptations, applies himself to the Circumstances of those, whom he would seduce: And it cannot be conceiv'd, that the most remarkable thing that ever has befallen Mankind, (except the Redemption of the World by Christ) should so come to pass, as not to be told to Posterity, but in an Allegory. For if the literal truth had ever been known, it was impossible it should be forgotten in so few Generations, and that *Moses* should put an Allegory in the room of it. Did the Children of *Israel* know the Historical Truth of the Fall, or did they not know it? If they did, why should *Moses* disguise it under an Allegory, rather than the rest of the Book of *Genesis*? If they did not know it, how could it be forgotten in so few Generations of Men, supposing it had ever been known to *Adam's* Posterity? If it were never known, but the relation of it were always conveyed down in *Metaphor* and *Allegory*, then this *Allegory* must pass for Historical Truth in those Ages; and the reason why it was delivered to

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them in *Allegory*, must be, because that manner of delivering it, was most suitable to that Age, and most credible, and every way most proper; and if it were most fitting that it should be thought to have happened so, this is a good Argument that it did really happen so, since there is nothing hinders, but it might so have happened, and it was most probable at least to the first Ages of the World, that it did so come to pass, or else it would not have been requisite to relate it in this manner.

3. The Fall of our First Parents brought a Curse upon their Posterity. And here it must be acknowledg'd, that God may bestow his infinite Grace and Mercies upon what terms he pleaseth, and therefore he might ordain, that the Happiness or Unhappiness of their Posterity should depend upon the Obedience or Disobedience of our First Parents.

(1.) God might ordain, that the Condition of their Posterity in this World should depend upon it, so that they should have been immortal upon their Obedience, and should become mortal upon their Disobedience; that they should be made subject to Cares and Labours, to Diseases and Dangers, by reason of the Fall of our First Parents, from which, otherwise they should have been exempt. This is esteem'd just in all Governments amongst Men, that Children should be reduced to Poverty and Disgrace by the fault of their Parents, from whom Riches and Honours were to have descended upon them: And this way of proceeding is just, both in Humane Laws, and in the Dispensations of Providence; because God and our Country have an antecedent right and interest in us, superior to any Man's private Title or Welfare; and this they may justly make use of to restrain Men from those Crimes, out of love and concern for their Posterity, from which no consideration of themselves could have with-held them. The Experience of the World has found this to be the most effectual Remedy

medy with many Men; and therefore, the wisest and justest Governments have made use of it; and the most wise and just God might think fit to deal in this manner with our First Parents, by representing to them, that the Happiness or Misery of their Posterity depended upon their good or ill Behaviour in this one Instance of their Duty. We daily see, that Children commonly inherit the Diseases of their Parents; and an extravagant and vicious Father leaves his Son Heir to nothing but the Name and Shadow perhaps of a Great Family, with an infirm and sickly Constitution, and little or nothing to support and relieve it. Now if these Miseries and Calamities had been entail'd upon all the Race of Mankind from *Adam*, the thing would have been the same in the nature and justice of it (for Numbers cannot alter the nature of things) as it is now, when they descend upon some, only from their immediate Parents. And therefore it must be much rather just, that the Fall of our First Parents should make their whole Race only *liable* to such Calamities, but not involve All necessarily in them.

(2.) The Communications of God's Loving-kindness, and the Favours and Blessings of his more immediate Presence, might depend upon the Behaviour of the First Parents of Mankind. He might send them out of Paradise, and might withdraw his free and usual Communications of himself from them and their Posterity, upon this Forfeiture, by their Disobedience. It was his undeserved, voluntary Bounty and Goodness, to vouchsafe them at first; and there could be no injustice in withdrawing them, after this Offence.

(3.) The proneness, which we cannot but observe in our selves to Sin, might proceed from hence: We daily see and feel the corruption of our Nature, by whatsoever means we became subject to it. So that it is in vain to object, that it would be unjust that all Mankind should be involv'd in *Adam's* Sin. For the

Condition which we are in, is Matter of Fact, of which no Man doth, or can doubt: The Question is only, how we come into this Condition; and since we are born in it, and it is our natural and hereditary Evil, the Justice and Goodness of God is cleared and vindicated, by assigning a Cause for it; from the imputations of such as must acknowledge the same corruption of Nature, but will allow no Cause or Reason for it, except the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of the Creator; unless they ascribe it to habits of Vice contracted in a state of Pre-existence, which, as I have shewn, is a mere Fiction, or Supposition, not only without Proof, but against all Reason. The Children of vicious Parents are generally most inclin'd to Vice; and if Men may partake of the evil Dispositions and Inclinations of their more immediate Parents, why might not the corruption of the humane Nature in our First Parents descend upon all their Posterity?

(4.) The Happiness of Men in the next Life, might depend upon the Obedience of our First Parents. For when God propos'd to bestow upon Men Rewards of Glory and Happiness, which far surpass any pretences of Desert or Claim of Right, that they in a state of Righteousness and Innocency could have been able to make; since the Promises were so great, and the Happiness so far exceeding any thing to which Men could pretend a Right; we must be very unreasonable, unless we will confess that God might bestow his own Gifts upon his own terms. He might therefore debar Men from Heaven upon the transgression of our First Parents, because the Promise of Heaven was an Act of his free Bounty. For no Man can pretend, that an innocent Creature which preserves its Integrity, must, for that reason, be advanced to the unspeakable Joys of Heaven. No Creature can be *profitable* to his Maker, and an *unprofitable* *Servant* can merit no such Reward. And what God was not oblig'd to bestow, tho' Men had continued in the state of Innocency, he might

might with all the Justice and Reason in the World refuse, when Men became divested of their Innocency, and thereby forfeited all pretences to that Happiness which was promised upon condition, that our First Parents had continued in their Primitive and Original state of Righteousness.

(5.) God might ordain, that all Men should become liable to eternal Misery by the Fall of our First Parents; and that those who would not accept of the Means appointed of Salvation by Faith in Christ, to rescue them from it, should perish eternally. We no sooner read of the Fall of Man, but Christ is forthwith promised, even before the punishment was denounced upon *Adam* and *Eve* for their Offence; the Seed of the Woman is immediately promised to bruise the Serpent's Head, and afterwards the Judgment is denounced, first upon *Eve*, and then upon *Adam*, for their Transgression; and the Seed of the Woman's bruising the Serpent's Head, is to be understood of Victory over our spiritual Enemies, and that Conquest which should be obtained over Death and Hell by Christ. For the temporal Punishment which was to befall *Adam* and *Eve*, and their Posterity, is afterwards added, and therefore this Promise cannot be understood of a Deliverance from that, but from the Wrath of God; and of Redemption from Sin upon Repentance, under whatever condition of this Life.

The consequence of the Sin of our First Parents, whereby they fell from their original Righteousness, and the Divine Grace, is to entail Grief, and Trouble, and Labour, and Pain upon their Posterity, and a frail and infirm Nature, exposed to Temptations, and destitute of the Aids of Grace, and the Presence of God in their Hearts, incapable of Heaven, and in no capacity of avoiding Hell without Christ's Merits. But *Adam* was the Figure of him that was to come. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness

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of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, Rom. v. 14, 18. Christ was, at that very time, promised to take away all the Curse and Vengeance consequent upon the Transgression of our First Parents, nay, his Death was pre-ordained and determined before-hand. For Christ is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 20. He was slain in the determinate Counsel, and Fore-knowledge of God, even before the Fall of our First Parents came to pass: and afterwards he was figuratively slain in the Sacrifices, which were appointed as Types of his death. The whole Scheme and Design of Man's Salvation, was laid from all Eternity in God's Counsel and Decree; he foresaw that Man would fall, and he determined to send his Son to redeem him; and this he had determined to do so long before the Fall of Man, even by an eternal Decree. So that the Goodness and Wisdom of God had effectually provided against the ill Consequences, to the Salvation of Mankind by the Fall, in all that obey him; and made it impossible that *Adam's* Posterity should become eternally miserable, and tormented in Hell Fire, but through their own Fault. For tho' we learn from the Scriptures, (*Ephes. ii. 3.*) that Infants are *by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath*, yet, whatever the Effects of that Wrath may be, we have no Ground to conclude, that any one shall be condemn'd to the Flames and Pains of Hell, without his own Personal and Actual Guilt. The Redemption of the World by Christ was decreed from Eternity, and was actually promis'd before any Child of *Adam* was born, and even before the Sentence was denounced upon our first Parents, and a Remedy was from the beginning provided against all that Misery, which was brought upon Mankind by their Transgression.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Eternity of Hell Torments.

THERE is nothing in Religion which has been thought by many, more liable to Objections, than the Eternity of Hell Torments: And yet I shall undertake to prove that it is plainly consistent, not only with the Justice, but with the Equity and Mercy of God.

I. I shall prove the Eternity of Hell Torments to be consistent with the Justice of God from these Arguments. 1. Because both Rewards and Punishments are alike propos'd to our Choice. 2. Because the Rewards are eternal as well as the Punishments. 3. Because it was necessary that the Sanction of the Divine Laws should be by eternal Rewards and Punishments. 4. Because it is necessary that eternal Punishments should be inflicted upon the Wicked, according to this Sanction. 5. I shall obviate the most material Objections.

1. Both Rewards and Punishments are alike propos'd to our Choice. It is certainly consistent with infinite Justice, to set before Men Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, and then to deal with them according to their own Choice. And none will fall into a state of everlasting Misery, but such as shall be convinced in their own Consciences of the Justice of God's Proceedings with them: And this Conviction will prove one great part of their Punishment, when they shall consider that they perish only by their own Fault, that they were wilful and obstinate to their own Ruin; that no Promises, no Threats could reclaim them. And this is all that the strictest Justice can require, to deal with Men according to their own Choice, to let them choose their own Condition of

Happiness or Misery, and to proceed in such a manner with Sinners, as that they shall be convinc'd themselves that there is no Injustice done them.

2. The Rewards are eternal as well as the Punishments. If the Rewards on the one hand had not born a just proportion to the Punishments on the other, the Cause had been different, and it had seem'd hard to suffer eternal Torments for a short Life of Sin, if there had not been eternal Happiness propos'd to as short a Life of Vertue and Righteousness. But since the Rewards and the Punishments are equal, it is not necessary that there should be an exact proportion between the Offence and the Punishment consider'd in it self, and without respect had to the Rewards; because the Reward being eternal, answers the opposite Punishment on the other Part. Thus Men are wont to set so much Loss against so much Gain; and no Man pities him that might have gain'd as much as he has lost, if it had not been his own Fault, tho' the Loss be never so great, and depended upon never so small and short a Trial.

It may seem an hard case, that a Man should lose his Life for but going out of a City, when he could do no hurt by it, nor intended to do any: and this was the Case of *Shimei*; but he had forfeited his Life before to *David*, who had spar'd him, and he had been afterwards engag'd, it seems, in other ill Practices, and had probably been concern'd with *Joab* and others in setting up *Adonijah*; for *David* gives *Solomon* the same Direction concerning *Joab* and *Shimei*, 1 Kings ii. 5, 8. And it was another *Shimei*, the Son of *Elah*, of whom it is said, that he was not with *Adonijah*, 1 Kings i. 8. iv. 18. *Solomon* therefore sets him this Condition, and he was to expect to live upon no other Terms, but his keeping within these Bounds, which by the Confession of *Shimei* himself, was a good saying, 1 Kings ii. 38. that is, he was glad of it, and could expect no kinder usage. How indeed could he make any Exception against it,

when by the Levitical Law, if a Man was slain by Accident, the Slayer was confin'd to one of the Cities of Refuge till the Death of the High-Priest, and then was to be at liberty; but if he were found without the Borders of the City of his Refuge before, the Revenger of Blood might kill him, *Num.* xxxv. 25. And if *Solomon* had propos'd some great Reward to *Shimei*, upon condition that he had kept within the City, he had been not only just, but very gracious and bountiful to him in it. I am confident any condemn'd Malefactor would think so. The Case of Mankind is like this, but infinitely more gracious on God's part, and more provoking on ours. The very best of us were born in Sin, and have often forfeited our Salvation to the Divine Justice; and God by his Sovereign Power and Authority over us might have propos'd any Terms of Reconciliation: But he has been pleas'd to appoint, that our everlasting state of Happiness or Misery should depend upon the moral Terms of Virtue and Vice, and to set everlasting Happiness against everlasting Misery; and no Man shall be sentenced to Hell Torments, but he might have been as happy as he shall find himself to be miserable.

Both the ^a *Jews* and ^b *Heathens* had a Notion of eternal Rewards and Punishments, as well as Christians; and the Eternity of the latter was the great Impediment, which *Epicurus* endeavour'd to remove out of the way, to the free Enjoyment of Men's Lusts. For whatever some have said in behalf of *Epicurus*, his own Words produced by ^c *Tully* and *Athenaeus*, too plain to be evaded, shew, that he did place all Happiness in sensual Pleasures, only he was willing to

^a *Isai.* xxxiii. 14. *lxvi.* 24. *Dan.* xii. 2.

^b *Plat.* in *Phæd.* *Lucret.* l. i. vers. 112, *Diog. Laert.* in *Pythag.* *Cels.* apud *Orig.* l. viii. *Lerii Hist. Navigat.* in *Brasil.* c. 16. *Abr. Roger de la Vie & les Mœurs des Bramines*, c. xxi. *Smith of Virginia*, p. 10.

^c *Cic. Tusc. Qu.* l. iii. *Athen. Deipnos.* l. vii. c. 5. l. xii. c. 12.

enjoy them as quietly and securely as he could, and for this Reason laid down divers Rules by way of expedient to keep the Mind in Peace, void of all Anxiety in this Life, and of all Hopes or Fears of a future state: The prevailing Belief of the eternal Punishments of wicked Men after Death was enough to ruin all his Philosophy; and therefore this was by all means to be removed, which yet he was never able to effect. So that this was a thing sufficiently known to make all Men sensible of what they must expect would be the Consequence of Sin. And what God has threatened so long before, and has given Men Time, and Opportunity, and Ability to avoid, they cannot fall under, but thro' their own Wilfulness and Misbehaviour, and can have no reason to complain, when it comes upon them.

3. It was necessary that the Sanction of the Divine Laws should be by eternal Rewards and Punishments. The Sanction of all Laws is by Rewards and Punishments, and the Design of appointing Punishments is to affright Men from Sin, as the end of Rewards is to invite them to Obedience. The only true Measure and just Proportion therefore between the Crime and the Punishment, is the Suitableness of the Punishment to enforce Obedience to the Law, and cause it to be duly observ'd. For if the Law be good and necessary, and cannot be so well and so effectually obey'd without a very severe Punishment to enforce it; the Severity of the Punishment is so far from Cruelty, that it is a just and wise Provision to secure Obedience to the Law, and procure all the Good design'd by it. Thus we always judge in Humane Laws: A Man is condemn'd to lose his Life for taking from another that which he perhaps could very well spare; but we are all agreed in the Justice of making such Examples, because we find that Men can scarce be secure in their Lives and Estates, notwithstanding the Severity of such Laws. And if the Terrors of everlasting Torments

ments will not frighten Men from Sin, what effect would a less Punishment denounced have had upon them? If Men can but once persuade themselves that the Torments of Hell are not so terrible, they freely give themselves up to all Licentiousness; and we know how fond Men of wicked Lives are of such Doctrines. God therefore perfectly understanding the Temper and Inclination, the Stubbornness and Perverseness of Mens Hearts, so prone to Vice, and so backward to all that is good; foresaw that a less Punishment threatned would not prevail with Men to forsake their Sins, and get to Heaven.

And with what Face can that Man object that the Torments of Hell are too great and intolerable, who, as terrible as they are, lives still secure and undisturb'd in his Sins? If they are so great that he complains of them, as unjust, Why doth he not leave his Sins? If he doth not forsake his Sins, they are not too great, since they have not attain'd that End upon him, for which the Punishment is denounced, *viz.* his Repentance and Amendment of Life. But if he doth not believe their Eternity, and therefore continues in his Sins, this shews, how necessary the Denouncing, and how necessary the Belief of eternal Punishments is. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant: Thou knewest that I was an austere man, wherefore then didst thou not do as thou wast commanded?*

4. It is necessary that eternal Punishments should be inflicted upon the Wicked according to the Sanction of the Divine Laws by eternal Rewards and Punishments. We find by sad Experience, how little effect the Punishments now threatned have upon too many Men, and if they were less dreadful they would be so much the less regarded. So that it appears, that the Appointment of eternal Punishments was but necessary to keep Men from Sin, and what God's Wisdom saw necessary to appoint, his Justice and Truth will

will make it necessary for him to inflict: For what he has so often and solemnly declared, he can never depart from, but will certainly execute it.

The Promises and Threatnings relating to Men in this Life are conditional, and are expressly declar'd to be so, *Jer.* xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 13. because in this Life Men are changeable from Good to Bad, or from Bad to Good; but the Threatnings as well as the Promises concerning Men in the other Life must be absolute and unconditional, because they relate to an unchangeable final state, which will admit of no Alteration either in the Wicked or in the Righteous. It is not therefore because God can recede from his Threatnings rather than from his Promises, that *Nineveh* was spar'd; but because all Threatnings during the state of this Life imply a condition of Repentance, upon which they are not to be inflicted, as *Jonah* and the *Ninevites* themselves well understood: but then all Promises too, which concern Men in this Life are under the like condition, and are not to be perform'd upon the Disobedience of those, to whom they are made, as we are assured by God's express Declaration. But what is threatned or promis'd to Men to befall them after this Life, is promis'd or threatned to befall them, when they shall be in a fix'd unalterable state, and therefore must be incapable of any Condition or Reserve to be imply'd in it. For when Men continue the same they were at the time when God's Promises and Threatnings were declared to them, his Promises and Threatnings always take place in this World according to the full Extent and Importance of the Words in which they were deliver'd; and therefore they must thus take place in the next World, into which when Men are once entred, they must for ever continue equally fit Objects either of the Divine Promises or Threatnings, as they were at the time of their Death. The Point is, that God never changes, but Men are changeable in this Life; and both his

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Promises and Threatnings, which concern Men here, suppose them such, and therefore *Rewards* are withheld, or Punishments remitted in this World, as Men fall into Wickedness, or become reclaim'd from it. But in the other World, where the state of Men is unalterable from good or bad, vertuous or vicious, both the Promises and Threatnings of God must be punctually fulfill'd, and can admit of no condition or reservation.

God has sworn, that those who will not believe and obey him, shall *not enter into his rest*, Heb. iii. 18. and what he has once sworn is irrevocable, Heb. vi. 17. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. And it is not only *threatned* that the Wicked shall suffer eternal Punishment, but it is likewise expressly *foretold*, that the Wicked shall be sentenced to *everlasting fire* at the Day of Judgment, and that they *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*, Matt. xxv. 41, 46. To leave no room for hopes of any End or Abatement of the Punishment, we have our Saviour's express Declaration, that the Sentence shall be pass'd according to the Threatning, and that the everlasting Punishment which is threatned, shall be certainly executed upon the wicked. Our Judge has beforehand declared what Sentence he will pass, and that it shall be accordingly executed; the Terms whereof are therefore as unalterable, as if it were already pronounc'd. He has declared, that the Punishments of the wicked, as well as the Rewards of the righteous shall be eternal, as directly and positively, as he has said any thing else relating to the last Judgment, or concerning any other part of his Gospel, and we have as little Reason to imagine that his express and repeated Affirmation is capable of a reserv'd Meaning in this particular, as in any other matter whatsoever.

5. I shall now briefly obviate such Objections as seem most considerable. Some of the Benefits and Advantages which are consequent to the Punishments
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of this World, are precedent to those of the next: Here Men are punish'd for their own Amendment, or for the Advantage and Security of others, or for both: In the next World the actual inflicting of Punishments is not for these ends, but they were threatned for these, and they must be inflicted when they have been once threatned and declared by God, who cannot lie. It is for the Repentance of Sinners, and for the Benefit of Good Men in preserving them in the ways of Vertue, and securing them from the Pride and Malice of the Wicked, that Hell should be threatned; but because it is the final and eternal state of the Wicked, it cannot be for their Amendment after the Execution of its Torments upon them, and Good Men being once out of the Power of Temptations, and placed beyond the Malice of the Wicked, can no longer have any Protection or Advantage from the Punishments denounced against impenitent Sinners; but whether the Advantages arising from Punishments be before or after the inflicting of Punishments, there is the same necessity for the appointing, and consequently for the inflicting them, *viz.* the Good of Mankind in keeping Men from Sin, and leaving those without excuse who will not be restrained from it, and work out their own Salvation. But another end of Punishment is, that Satisfaction for the violation of the Laws may be made to the supreme Authority which is despised and affronted by it: And the vindication of God's Honour and Authority, and of his Truth and Holiness in his hatred and detestation of Sin, and his indignation against Sinners, is manifested by the actual Punishments of the Damned; and it would be an Argument of the contrary to all this, if they were threatned and not inflicted.

And the Number of Persons to be thus punished doth not alter the case, but only shews that many are concerned in it; and if the case be the same, the Justice must be the same too, tho' the Persons be never

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ver so many upon whom it is executed. That which is just towards one, or merciful towards one, is just or merciful towards never so many thousands. For Justice and Mercy consist in the nature of things, not in the greater or lesser number of Persons to whom they are extended. And tho' multitudes of Criminals are apt to move compassion in Men ; yet this proceeds partly from the sympathy and frailty of humane Nature, which is mightily swayed by Number and Multitude to do either Good or Evil ; partly from the nature of humane Affairs : For to destroy Multitudes, would depopulate Cities and Countries, and would be an affliction to multitudes of innocent Persons, their Friends and Relations. But it is not so in the present case ; there will be no want of Numbers in Heaven, and the Righteous shall be everlastingly happy, and shall perceive no diminution of their Happiness by reason of the Damnation of such as were never so dear to them in this World. And Mercy and Pity is not a Passion in God as it is in Men, but a Perfection, it is the highest Reason and Equity ; and therefore, tho' the Misery of Sinners be never so severe, and the number of the Miserable never so great ; yet when the equity and reasonableness of the case doth not require it, there is nothing to move God for their relief, because he acts by the standing Rules of Reason and Wisdom, not by any fondness and weakness of Passion.

II. I come now to shew, how consistent it is with the Mercy of God to inflict eternal Torments upon Sinners. Strict Justice has a severe Aspect, and it may seem hard for frail Man to abide the Sentence, that he may in strictness of Justice deserve. But from the Justice of God, it is natural for us to appeal to his Mercy, and thither he allows us to appeal, but not so, as to expect that he should be so merciful as not to be just, or should forget that he is the supreme Governour of the World, whilst he extends his Mercy
to

to the offending and criminal part of it. Punishment is necessary to all Government, and God as Governour of the World must inflict Punishments, and what these are to be, it belongs to his sovereign Wisdom to appoint.

And eternal Torments were appointed for the punishment of Sin, not only out of a very just, but even out of a gracious design, because nothing less than the threatening of them would keep Men from Sin, and from that Misery which is the unavoidable consequence of it, and so bring them to Heaven. It is an ancient and true Observation which ^dSt. *Chrysostom* has made, that there is Mercy even in the Threats of eternal Vengeance, because nothing less could have brought many Men to Heaven. For there is no doubt to be made, but many will be there, who shall have cause to thank God for this, as the thing which first opened their Eyes, and moved them to Repentance, and thereby brought them to Bliss and Glory. And the same Mercy was extended to those that perish, and would not make the same use of it, which if they had done they had never perished: Tho' Heaven and Hell, says ^eSt. *Chrysostom*, be contrary to each other, yet they both aim at the same end, the Salvation of Mankind; the Joys of Heaven invite Men to it, and the Fear of Hell forces those to Heaven, who otherwise would be regardless of their own Happiness.

God has used the most proper and prevailing means to convince Sinners of their danger, and to persuade them to escape it, and obtain Salvation. We have everlasting Rewards, and everlasting Punishments, proposed to our choice; we are exhorted with the greatest earnestness, and mov'd and assisted with the continual influences and aids of Grace, to avoid the punishments, and are as earnestly invited, and as suffi-

^d Chrys. ad Stagir. lib. i. Tom. 6. Sav. Edit.

^e Chrys. ad Pop. Antioch. de Statuis, Hom. 7.

ciently enabled to obtain the Rewards. God *hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked : but that the wicked turn from his way and live*, as he solemnly and with an Oath declares by his Prophet, *Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.* It is his principal intention and desire, that all Men should be saved : He has proclaimed himself to be the Lord, the Lord God, *merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin* ; but then it is added, that he *will by no means clear the guilty*, that is, the obstinate and impenitent Sinner, *Excd. xxxiv. 6, 7.* He exhorts, he invites, he promises, he threatens ; he promises eternal Happiness. and threatens eternal Misery, to give all the discouragement to Vice, and all the enduement to Religion and Vertue, which is possible. Last of all, he has sent his Son to instruct us in our Duty, and to confirm all this to us, and to purchase our Redemption with his own Blood. When the Son of God himself suffered Death, it was to redeem Men from no less than eternal Death and Damnation.

God deals with Men in the plainest and most condescending manner ; he lays their Duty before them, with the Rewards and Punishments annex'd, and both eternal, the better to secure them in their obedience, and force them to be happy : and then he takes Men at no advantage, but makes all reasonable allowances, in consideration of the frailty of humane Nature, and in condescension to their Infirmities ; he exacts not absolute Perfection, nor any impossible Obedience, but requires, that, tho' we cannot live without Sin, yet we should not sin wilfully and obstinately ; that we should not allow and indulge our selves in Sin, and should repent if we have done so ; he requires a faithful and sincere diligence in all the Parts of our Duty, which is no more than what every Father and Master expects from his Children and Servants. When Men have sinned, God admits of their Repentance ; and if, after Repen-

tance, they sin again, yet still they shall be accepted upon a renew'd Repentance: nay, after a long course of Sin, a sincere Repentance may reconcile them to God; and no Repentance can be too late, that is sincere. It is extremely dangerous indeed, to defer our Repentance for one moment, because our Lives are so uncertain, and we may provoke God to that degree, that he will no longer afford us an opportunity to repent, nor bestow that Grace upon us, which is necessary to Repentance. But this is after repeated Provocations, and an obstinate rejecting of the Goodness of God, which leads Men to Repentance: And these are the Terms of the Gospel, that *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.* There is great Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, and the returning Prodigal is received with the greatest Favour and Tenderness. If we will be obedient, we have the assistance of God's Grace; and if we have done amiss, yet his Grace is offered us to bring us to Repentance; and we may be pardoned, upon sincere Resolutions of Obedience for the future. But if Men either disbelieve or disregard all these things, if they neither care for God's Promises, nor fear his Threatnings; if they trample under-foot the Blood of his Son, and grieve his blessed Spirit; if all the Methods of his Mercy and Goodness be lost upon them, there remains no other Remedy, but Justice must have its course. If when they are told so long before-hand, what danger they are in, Men will continue obstinate in their Disobedience, after so many invitations and encouragements to Repentance, and after so great importunity and forbearance; they can have no reason to complain of the severity of that Sentence, which they have been so often threatned with, and have as often despised.

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Since the Rewards are eternal on the one hand, and the Punishments on the other, the Rewards being proportionable to the Punishments, the Terms are on both sides equal; and since it is in our power, by the help of the Divine Grace, to avoid the Punishments, and obtain the Rewards, the condition is such, as that any wise Man would be thankful for it, and would be glad that such a Prize is put into his hands; so far would he be from complaining, that the terrors of Punishments are join'd to the encouragement of Rewards; that all Motives concur to make him happy, and that God has used all means both inward by his Grace, and outward by his Promises and Threatnings, to bring us to Salvation.

I repeat it again, for God himself often repeats it in the Holy Scriptures; God *hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, but hath used all means to prevent it; he hath provided Heaven for us, and threatened Hell, if we will not be persuaded to go to Heaven. If Men will neglect the Means of their Salvation, and will not repent and turn to him, notwithstanding all his most loving and compassionate Exhortations, and the Death of his own Son for them; if neither Heaven can invite, nor Hell frighten them from their Sins, they must thank themselves only for that Destruction, which they bring upon themselves. The Appeal which God so long ago made to the *House of Israel*, may at the last Day be alledg'd to Sinners. Ye have said, that *the way of the Lord is not equal*. Hear now, O ye Sinners. *Is not my way equal?* have not your ways been *unequal*? And the ways of God shall then appear so equal, and the ways of wicked Men so unreasonable and perverse, that their own Consciences shall bear witness against them; and he that died to save them, will pronounce the Sentence of eternal Damnation upon them.

C H A P. XV.

Of the Jewish Law.

There is nothing which vulgar Minds are more surpris'd and offended at, nor at which Men of Understanding and Experience are less inclin'd to wonder or take offence, than the several Laws and Customs of divers Nations in the different Ages and Climates of the World : The Habit, the Language, the Letters, and manner of Writing ; the Food, the Complexion, the Features of the Body, and Disposition of the Mind, are various in different Countries and Ages. And therefore it is no wonder that the Political and Ceremonial Part of the *Jewish Law*, which was given so many Ages ago, and in a Country, which is at this Day very different in its Customs from ours, should be as different from the Customs in use amongst us, as the Age and Climate. For when God doth appoint Laws for Men, he must be supposed to appoint such as are suitable to the necessities and occasions of those for whom they are made. And some who have travelled into the Eastern Countries, which are not so variable in their fashions and way of Living, as the Western Nations are, have found great advantages both from the nature of the Inhabitants, and of the Climates, and from the Customs and Manners of those Parts of the World, for the explication of divers places of Scripture, which depend upon the knowledge of those Countries.

Now the whole *Jewish Law* may be divided into the *Moral*, the *Political* or *Judicial*, and the *Ceremonial Law*. The *Moral Part* of *Moses's Law*, which is contain'd in the Ten Commandments, and enjoins our Duty towards God and towards our Neighbour, is just and holy beyond all Controversie or Exception. And the *Political* or *Judicial Part*, with the *Ceremonial*,

nial, was adapted to the Circumstances and Necessities of those Ages, and that Nation. And if the Moral Part be absolutely most divine and holy, and the positive Institutions, both Political and Ritual, were the most fit and proper for that Time and Government; that is, if they were the best that could be, for those Ages and that People; then the whole Body of the *Mosaick* Law is without all just Exception. And that this is so, it will be evident, if we observe the Reasons upon which the positive Laws amongst the *Jews* were instituted.

I. The Judicial Laws, relating to the Administration of Justice in the *Jewish* Government, are so reasonable, that they have been transcrib'd into the Laws of the wisest Heathen Nations, as hath been particularly shewn by Learned Men. There are but few of the Judicial Laws which have been objected against, and these have been often and effectually vindicated. The Law which seems most harsh and rigorous, is that of Retaliation; which yet was the most ancient way of Punishment in most Nations, and was not unjust for the Laws to inflict, tho' it was sinful in the Persons injured to require it out of a desire of Revenge, and with a delight to gratifie themselves in their Enemies Sufferings. For if it be just to punish the taking away of a little Money with Death, how can it be unjust to inflict the same Punishment for the depriving a Man of his Eye? And if it be not unjust to make Death the Punishment of striking out an Eye (and what Nation doth not punish much less Injuries with Death?) how can it be unjust to punish the Offender with the loss of his own Eye? One of the severest Laws that ever was known amongst a civilized People, was that of the Twelve Tables, which gave leave to^a the Creditors among the *Romans*, to divide the

^a *Sunt enim quædam non laudabilia Naturæ, sed jure concessa : ut in xii Tabulis Debitoris Corpus inter Creditores dividilicuit; quam legem mos publicus repudiavit.* Quintil. Institut. lib. iii. cap. 6.

Debtor's Body between them, if he were insolvent : This was one of those things which are not commendable in their own Nature, but yet are allow'd and permitted, as *Quintilian* has observ'd upon particular Reasons: but this Law was laid aside by a general disuse, and ^b that of Retaliation among the *Jews* was interpreted by them, according to an ancient Tradition, to be meant not of strict Retaliation, but of a Compensation to be made in Money to the Person maimed.

II. Many of those Rites which may seem strange to us, were so far from being esteem'd absurd, that they became common in those Countries, as Circumcision was antiently, and is to this day practis'd in many Parts of the World; the ^c *Ægyptians*, and many other Nations, abstain'd from Swine's Flesh, and the *Æthiopians* from most of the Meats which were forbidden the *Jews*; such Abstinencies being necessary for Health in those Countries. Frequent Washings likewise are requisite in hot Countries for Health and Refreshment; Religion prescrib'd only the time, and manner, and particular occasion of it; the thing it self is natural. ^d Circumcision is used in *Abyssinia*, as the Custom only of the Country: as the Incision of the Face is in *Æthiopia* and *Nubia*, and the boring of the Ear in *India*. And when we see such a Body of Laws of so great Antiquity, well contriv'd, and wisely instituted for the substance of them; if there be in some of them any thing peculiar and singular; tho' they were but the Laws of a Man, yet common Modesty and Candour might make us conclude, that so wise a Lawgiver must have some good reason for those particular Laws, which at this distance of time and

^b Maimon. in Seder Zeraim. Præf. p. 5.

^c Herodot. l. ii. c. 47. l. iv. c. 63, 186. Plut. Sympos. l. iv. Q. 5. Plin. l. viii. c. 52. Grot. ad Lev. xi. & Act. x. 15. Claudii Regis *Æthiopiæ* Confess. apud Ludolf.

^d Id. ibid.

place cannot be so obvious to us; but it would be rashness to suspect, that he had no sufficient reason for those, who appears to have enacted the rest with so great Wisdom. Thus it would be natural for a Man of tolerable Modesty to conclude, even concerning a System of humane Laws, tho' no probable Account could be given of many of them. But when God is the Lawgiver, this ought to silence all Disputes, that they are his Laws, and therefore must be wise and good for that People, at that time, and in their condition and circumstances. The Will and Authority of God, without any other reason, is sufficient of it self in any case to be alledg'd; and it may be fit, in some cases, that we should have no other reason to produce.

It is a rash and dangerous thing to conclude, that God did not command this or that, because we do not see why it should be commanded; this is to say, that we will not believe God to be the Author of any thing which we do not like, or would not have to be his. Are we wont to argue thus about humane Laws? Would it be any excuse for a disobedient Subject to say, that in his opinion, such Laws were not fit to be made, and that therefore he would not believe his Prince had made such Laws; when he had all due notice and full evidence, that he had appointed them, but was resolved to reject the whole Body of Laws upon the account of some which he did not fancy, which yet were obsolete and out of date? Do we not allow that Reasons of State and of Government may require many things to be done, and many Laws to be made, which it doth not belong to private Men to be curious about, and which the greatest part of the Subjects are not able to comprehend? And are not God's Thoughts infinitely above the Thoughts of the wisest Men, and infinitely farther out of our Reach, than the Counsels of the most prudent and politick Prince can be above the Understanding of his meanest

and most ignorant Subjects? How shall we dare then to reject any Divine Revelation, because it is not agreeable in every particular to our Thoughts and Notions of things? But I shall enquire however into the Reasons and Grounds, which appear to us at this distance of Time for the Ceremonial Laws, and I doubt not but these will be sufficient to justify them to all impartial Men.

1. The Ceremonial Laws were given the *Jews* to prevent them from falling into Idolatry. For they were design'd to distinguish the *Jews* in many things from the Neighbouring Nations, and to hinder them from following their Idolatrous Customs. And the Customs of the ^e People of *Israel*, and of the Nations round about them, and the several sorts of Idolatry practis'd amongst the *Ægyptians* and *Canaanites* must needs render the particular occasions and grounds of those Laws, which were made to restrain them from Idolatry, difficult to be understood by all who are unacquainted with the Rites and Idolatrous Worship of those Nations. But of those Laws it is enough for ordinary Readers to know, that they had respect to the Idolatries then practis'd amongst the bordering Nations, and this the Scripture often tells us, *Lev.* xviii. 3. xx. 23, 24, 25. *Deut.* xii. 30, 31. xiv. 1, 2. xviii. 9. ^f *Origen* has observ'd, that those Beasts were by the Law of *Moses* declared to be unclean, by which the *Ægyptians* and other Heathen Nations were wont to make their Divinations, and that most besides were allow'd of as clean. And other Particulars have been made out by Learned Men from the best Remains of

^e *Summa vero rei hac est: quemadmodum in precedentibus tibi dixi, dogmata & ritus Zabiorum hodie nobis esse incognitas: ita quoque latent nos Historie & annales temporum illorum. Quod si autem illa, omniaque particularia, qua in illis temporibus acciderunt, nobis essent cognita, multarum quoque in lege divinâ rerum particularium rationes scire possemus. Maim. More Nevoch, l. iii. c. 50.* ^f *Orig. contra Cels. l. iv,*

Antiquity. I shall give one remarkable Instance, not commonly taken notice of by Commentators. In *Exodus* xxiii. 15. we find the Institution of the Three great Festivals, that of unleavened Bread, or the Passover, that of Pentecost, or of the First-Fruits in the beginning of Harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering, or of Tabernacles in the end of the Year; and *ver.* 19. we read, *The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the House of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seeth a Kid in his Mother's Milk.* Divers Interpretations have been put upon this Prohibition; but that which best explains it, and is questionless the true, tho' perhaps not the only Reason of it, is taken from the *Jewish* Writers. "It seems most probable, says *Abrabanel*, "that this Command was occasioned from a Custom "among the Idolatrous Heathens, who at the time "of their gathering in of Fruits, were wont to boil a "Kid in the Dam's Milk, thinking that by this means "they were made acceptable to the Gods, and did "procure a Blessing by it. In confirmation whereof, he mentions a Custom not unlike this, used in his own time, in some parts of *Spain*. But a Comment of an ancient *Karraite* upon the Pentateuch in MS. gives a more particular account of this Usage. For it is there added, that the Heathens took the said Milk, and in a magical way, went about, and besprinkled with it all the Trees, and Fields, and Gardens, and Orchards; thinking by this means, that they should make them fructify, and bring forth fruit again more abundantly the following Year &c.

And as the *Jews* were taught to look upon the Idolatrous Nations as polluted, and had Laws given them purposely to hinder them from too dangerous a Freedom and Familiarity with Idolaters; so these Laws might be easily practis'd when they liv'd within themselves, separated from other People, but are now become unpracticable since they are dispers'd amongst

all Nations, and the Laws which were adapted to the State and Circumstances of the *Jewish* Nation and Government, must be out of Date, since the Dissolution of their Government, and the Dispersion of the whole People into other Countries. These Laws may well seem strange now unto us, when they pretend to practise them, but this ought to be attributed not to the Laws themselves, but to their Adherence to them when the Obligation to observe them is so long since expired, and when the People of the *Jews* are in a condition in which many of their Laws cannot, and others were never design'd to be observ'd. Some ^h of their *Rabbins* have held that things forbidden by the Law might be eaten by them out of the Land of *Judaea*; and the Reason why *Daniel* refused to eat of the *King's Meat*, and drink of his *Wine*, was, because it was the Custom of ⁱ ancient Times, and particularly in those Countries, to consecrate all which they did either eat or drink to their Gods, by putting part of it on the Altar, or casting it into the Fire; so that to eat of such Meats, or to drink of such Wine had been to partake of things offer'd to Idols. Whereas, by the Law of *Moses*, nothing was to be eaten or drunken by the Children of *Israel*, but what had been offer'd to the Lord, either immediately in it self, or virtually in the First-fruits and Offerings, *Levit.* xvii. 3. xxiii. 14. *Deut.* xii. 21, 26. But the ^k modern *Jews* give this Reason, why they may drink Wine made by those of other Nations, because they now do not live among Idolaters, and therefore according to the Doctrine of their *Rabbins*, they are no longer obliged by those Prohibitions, which were design'd only to restrain them from Idolatry. And in the *Babyl. nish* Captivity they were not under so great Difficulties in the Observation of the Laws concerning Clean and Unclean

^h Grot. ad Act. x. 15.
ad Athen. l. i. c. 11.

ⁱ Grot. ad Dan. i. 8. Casaub.
^k Leo Moden. Part ii. c. 8. §. 1.

Meats, as they have lain under since their total and final Dispersion, for the Favour which God gave them with the Heathens amongst whom they liv'd, and the Multitudes which were carry'd away and liv'd together, afforded them the Conveniency of following their own Rites and Customs in eating such Meats only as were not forbidden or defiled: And then they were restrain'd from Idolatry by these Abstinencies, and they became the more remarkable in the Eyes of the Heathens, and their wonderful Zeal for their Religion even in the smallest matters, was apt to make those among whom they were Captives, the more earnest to enquire into the greater and more substantial and excellent Things of their Law. And these were Reasons which were worth their submitting to great Inconveniencies, by adhering to their Legal Observances in other Countries. But now these and all other Reasons are ceas'd, and the Case is alter'd, since they are a despised People, dispers'd in small Parties over the face of the whole Earth; and therefore the Abstinencies of the *Jews* are apt to be look'd upon as absurd by those with whom they converse, that will not be at the pains to consider the Grounds upon which they were at first instituted, and that they are no longer practicable, nor design'd to be practis'd, by their Original Institution.

2. Circumcision, Purifications, Abstinencies, Sacrifices, and other Rites enjoin'd by the Law of *Moses*, were not required for their own sake, or for any real Vertue and Efficacy supposed to be in the things themselves, to recommend Men to God's Favour, but were instituted to signify the inward Purity and Integrity of the Heart, and by outward Observances and sensible Things, to lead a carnal and sensual People to the Knowledge and Practice of things Spiritual. The Children of *Israel* are sometimes said to be *sanctified*, that is, to be separated and set apart for God's Honour

nour and Service by these Rites and Ceremonies, both because they were hereby distinguish'd from other Nations, and because this Ritual Worship was appointed as a means to lead them to internal Sanctity and Holiness of Mind, and to procure in them an Awe and Reverence of that Majesty, by whose Commandment it was to be observ'd.

Circumcision was appointed as a Fœderal Rite, and as a Token and Pledge of the Covenant between God and *Abraham*, and his Seed after him, of which the *Messias* was to be born. And as it was a Sacrament of the Covenant between God and the People of *Israel*, so it had respect to the Nations whom they were to root out; these Nations were notorious for the Sins of the Flesh, *Lev. xviii. 24.* and there is a peculiar Significancy in the Rite of Circumcision of the Restraint and Excision of Carnal Lusts. It was declar'd by *Moses* himself to signify the Circumcision of the Heart, *Lev. xxvi. 41. Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6.* and likewise by the Prophets, *Jer. iv. 4. vi. 10. ix. 26. Ezek. xlv. 7.* They expounded Circumcision in a Mystical and Spiritual Sense; and according to this Notion of Circumcision, *St. Stephen* bespeaks the *Jews*, *Acts vii. 51, &c.* *St. Paul* maintains that the true Circumcision is among the Christians, whereof the *Jewish* Circumcision of the Flesh was but a Figure, *Rom. ii. 28. Phil. iii. 3.*

The Pardon of Sin upon Repentance is express'd in Scripture by cleansing and purifying, *Psal. xix. 12. li. 2. Isai. i. 16. Jer. iv. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.* by which is denoted to us, that the outward cleansing of the Flesh was design'd to put Men in mind of the inward Purification and Cleansing from Sin and from Unrighteousness, because this defiles the Soul, and makes it loathsome in God's Sight, *2 Cor. vii. 1. Jam. iv. 8.* Unleavened Bread was an Emblem of *Sincerity and Truth*, *1 Cor. v. 8.*

Abstinency from things in a Legal Account *Common and Unclean*, was appointed to restrain Men by Symbolical Instructions from Sin, which pollutes the Mind; and the Moral ¹ Signification of such Prohibitions is imply'd in the Proverb alledg'd by St. Peter concerning Dogs and Swine, which are two of the Animals prohibited the *Jews*, 2 Pet. ii. 22.

Sacrifices and Offerings were to represent to them, that they depended upon God for all they had, and therefore they were to offer something of every kind in acknowledgment that they had receiv'd all which they enjoy'd from him. They were likewise design'd to signify to them that their Sins deserv'd Death, even *Everlasting Burnings*. The daily Sacrifices were to be Remembrances to them of that acceptable and living Sacrifice, which they were to offer to God, *a broken and a contrite heart*, and an innocent and blameless Life, *Psal. iv. 4, 5. cxli. 2.* And the Scriptures frequently testify how little Pleasure God took in the Sacrifices of Beasts, and in Burnt-Offerings, Incense, and Oblations, and how small regard he had to them: He never required these things for themselves and upon their own account, or because there is any thing acceptable to him in them, *Psal. xl. 6. l. 8. li. 17.* To do Justice and love Mercy is more acceptable to God than all Sacrifices, *Prov. xxi. 3. Jer. vii. 22, 23.* This is so evident throughout the whole Old Testament, that the Scribes and Pharisees in the most superstitious and corrupt Age of the *Jewish Church*, could not but confess that the Love of God and of our Neighbour is of more account in God's Sight than all the Sacrifices and Oblations in the World, *Mark xii. 37.* The Ceremonial Part of the Law was always to

¹ *Quid ergo est? In Animalibus mores depinguntur humani, & Actus & Voluntates.—in Animalibus per legem quasi quoddam humana vite speculum constitutum est.* Novatian. de Cib. Judaic. cap. 3.

give place to the Moral: Thus Acts of Charity were to be done, tho' it happen'd that they were perform'd by the Violation of the *Jewish* Sabbath, and the Prophets were, upon necessary Causes, held exempted from the Legal Observances. *For I desired Mercy and not Sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than Burnt-Offerings*, Hos. vi. 6.

3. All the *Jewish* Worship appointed by the Mosai-cal Law was Typical of Christ and his Gospel. By a *Type* we are to understand the Likeness and Resemblance which one thing has to another, as that of the Impression to the Seal, or of the Shadow to the Substance, or of the Picture to the Man whom it represents. Thus the Death of Christ was typify'd or resembled, or represented and prefigured by the Death of the Beasts which were sacrificed; they were Signs appointed to keep up the Remembrance that Christ was to be sacrificed, and were very apt and proper to put Men in mind of it.

It was acknowledg'd by the *Jews*, and receiv'd from the Beginning as a certain Rule for the Interpretation of Scripture, that there was a Typical as well as a Literal Sense of it, relating to the *Messias* and his Kingdom. Circumcision was to signify to them that Christ was to be born of the Seed of *Abraham*, to whom Circumcision was first enjoin'd, upon the Promise made to him of *Isaac*, from whom Christ was to descend: And the Blood shed in Circumcision was Typical of that Blood which Christ was to shed for us.

The most probable Account of the Original of Sacrifices, is, that they were at first of Divine Institution, and were appointed soon after the Fall of Man, as Types of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, who was promis'd to be sent to die for the Expiation of Sin. For though there be a Natural Reason why we should not offer unto the Lord our God of that which doth cost us nothing, but should honour the Lord with our substance, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Prov. iii. 9. and should present

sent some part of the best of what we have, in Devotion and Gratitude to him, from whom we have receiv'd the Whole : Yet no sufficient Reason can be given why Beasts should be slain in Sacrifice, before they were used, as far as it appears, for Food by Men, or how it should be imagined that God would accept of the Blood of any Creature, or be pleas'd with the taking from it that Life which he had given it; or why a peculiar Efficacy towards the Expiation of Sin was supposed to be in the Blood, unless it had been upon the Account of the Blood of Christ, which was typically prefigur'd by the Blood of Beasts. By Faith whereof, *Abel* offer'd his Sacrifice, and was accepted, *Heb. xi. 4.* But Faith is an assurance of acceptance, grounded upon a Divine Promise revealed. In this sense *Faith* is to be understood according to the constant usage of the word in Scripture, and the tenour of that Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruits of the Ground an offering to the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his Flock; &c. Gen. iv. 3, 4. It seems to have been an Anniversary Oblation, at the end of the Year, as the words here rendred in process of time may be translated. For in the Original it is at the end of days; and that Days in Scripture often denote the whole number of Days in the course of a Year, may appear by many instances; I shall mention but two or three. *There is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh, from days to days, that is yearly; as our Translators render it, or from year to year, Judg. xxi. 19. His Mother made him a little Coat, and brought to him from year to year when she came up with her Husband to the yearly Sacrifice, 1 Sam. ii. 19.* Here from days to days is rendred from year to year, and the Sacrifice of Days, the Yearly Sacrifice.

In the Books of *Moses* we find no Institution either of Sacrifice or of Prayer it self, which is the first and most fundamental Duty of Religion. But they are both

both supposed as Principles and Articles of Religion universally known and practised from the beginning of the World. And it is absurd to imagine that *Adam* did not offer Sacrifice as well as *Cain* or *Abel*, or to suppose that he learned it of them, and not they from him. But every year, the accustomed and solemn time returning, they by their Father's Example performed that Worship which God himself had appointed, and brought their offerings to their Father, by whom, as a Priest, they were to be presented in Sacrifice. And God did in some visible manner signify his acceptance of *Abel's* Sacrifice, but not of *Cain's*; probably *Abel's* offering was consumed by fire from Heaven. For which Reason St. ^m *Jerom* approves of *Theodotion's* translation ἐνεπύρεσεν, *he set on fire*, instead of *he had respect unto*. But that which most confirms this supposition is, that Fire was afterwards sent from Heaven to consume Sacrifices in token of God's Acceptance; at the Dedication of the Temple built by *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* vii. 1. and at *Elijah's* Prayer, for this confirmation of his Mission, 1 *King.* xviii. 38. and this was the attestation given to *Aaron* at his entrance upon his Office, *Lev.* ix. 24. And in this first instance of Sacrifices and Oblations, they are mention'd, not as then first used, but as received and accustomed Acts of Worship, to which *Cain* as well as *Abel* knew himself obliged. The Paschal Lamb was a plain Type of Christ, for which Reason Christ is styled, *the Lamb of God, and our Passover, which is sacrificed for us*, *Joh.* i. 29. 1 *Cor.* v. 7. And for the same Reason, the Feast of the Passover was appointed to the *Israelites* just before their Escape out of *Ægypt* to be a Type to them of that Deliverance which Christ was to accomplish, of which their Deliverance out of *Ægypt* was but a Figure. *Aaron* was a Type of Christ, and all the Sacrifices he offered were Types of

^m Quæst. in Genesim.

Christ's Sacrifice upon the Cross : The legal Sacrifices freed the Offenders from temporal Punishments, *Levit. vi. 7.* and thereby typified Christ's Sacrifice upon the Cross, by the Merit whereof we are delivered from eternal Damnation. They were appointed to take away the legal Uncleaness, to restore Men to a state of legal Purity, which was typical of moral and spiritual Purity, and to put the legal Worshippers into such a condition as the Law required to qualifie them for the *legal Service and Worship*; and herein they were Figures of that one Sacrifice, which was to be offered up once for all, in atonement for the Sins of all Mankind, *Heb. ix. 14.* whereby Men might be rendred capable of paying God an acceptable Service *in Spirit and in Truth*, and of offering the Sacrifices of Praise and good Works, the *spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, *Heb. xiii. 15, 16.* *1 Pet. ii. 5.*

Legal Purifications were typical of that Purification which is by the Blood of Christ, *Tit. ii. 14.* *1 John i. 9.* And the smoak of the Incense ascending, signified how the Prayers of the Saints come up before God, *Psal. cxli. 2.* *Luke i. 10.* *Rev. v. 8.* *viii. 3, 4.* The State and Dispensation of the Gospel is express'd by the Prophet *Malachi* under the Figure of *Incense*, and a *pure Offering*, *Malach. i. 11.*

The whole Epistle to the *Hebrews* is written upon this Subject, to shew that all the Legal Rites and Ceremonial Worship, were but Shadows, and Types, and Figures of Christ, and of that Redemption, Righteousness, and Sanctification, which was to be wrought by him, and that therefore they were to cease when in him they had received their Accomplishment. Their Incense and Purifications, their Sacrifices, their Temple, and the Priests themselves, were all but so many Types of Christ and his Kingdom under the Gospel. Christ had been promised to our first Parents immediately after their Fall, and this Promise had been re-

newed to *Abraham*, with an assurance that he should descend from *Isaac*, and Circumcision was instituted as a perpetual mark in the Flesh of that Covenant; and all Sacrifices from the beginning of their Institution, were as so many Types and Memorials of the Sacrifice of Christ, which was promised before any Sacrifice had been offered: And more especially, that of the Passover at the deliverance of the *Israelites* out of *Ægypt*, was a lively Representation of our Redemption by the Death of Christ. They had ever this notion of their legal Worship: *Abraham*, to whom Circumcision was appointed, *saw the day* of Christ; he foresaw his Descent from himself, which was thereby prefigured, *and was glad*, John viii. 56. *The Gospel was preached unto Abraham*, Gal. iii. 8. And *Moses*, by whom the Ceremonial Service was ordained, had so clear a prospect of the *Messias* and his Kingdom, that he *esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Ægypt*, Heb. xi. 26. Those places of Scripture which the Apostles apply to Christ out of the Old Testament, were at that time by the *Jews* themselves, to whom they cite them, understood of the *Messias*; they always supposed, that whatever was great and excellent among them, was but a faint and imperfect resemblance of that Glory and Excellency, which was to be in its full Perfection and Accomplishment under the *Messias*.

4. During this Ceremonial Dispensation, there was a sufficient Revelation of the internal and spiritual part of Religion: In the Books of *Moses*, the Love of God with all the Heart, and the Love of their Neighbour as of themselves, is expressly commanded the Children of *Israel*, Lev. xix. 18. Deut. vi. 5. The High Priest's Office was to bless the People, Numb. vi. 23. and the Office of the Priests and Levites, besides the Ceremonial Service, was *to stand every Morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at Even,*
I Chron.

1 Chron. xxiii. 30. 2 Chron. xxxi. 2. and ⁿ no Sacrifice was ever offered without Prayers; for Sacrifices were indeed solemn Rites of Supplication and Thanksgiving, 1 Sam. vii. 9. Prov. xv. 8. 2 Chron. xxix. 27. Ezra vi. 10. ^o and this is the Notion which the Hea-then had of Incense and Offerings. The Temple is styled, *the House*, not of Sacrifice, but of Prayer, Isa. lvi. 7. for which, principally it was built, 2 Chron. vi. 29, &c. The immortality of the Soul is implied in that Expression, which is often used in the Books of Moses, that Men when they died, were gathered to *their People*: which must be understood of their Souls; their Bodies being buried at different places, and in divers Countries, not where their Ancestors had been buried. God says to Abraham, *Thou shalt go to thy Fathers in Peace*, Gen. xv. 15. which cannot be understood of the place of his Burial; and he is said by Death, to be gathered to his People, chap. xxv. 8. The Soul of Rachel is said to depart, or go out of her Body, Gen. xxxv. 18. And Jacob yielded up the Ghost, and was gathered unto his People, chap. xlix. 33. his Soul was gathered. But a considerable time was spent in embalming his Body, and in mourning for him, before that was carried into Canaan to be buried, chap. l. 3. From these Expressions, the ^p Jews proved the Soul to be immortal. And tho' this, and such like Phrases, may sometimes signifie no more than *their going the way of all the earth*, (Josh. xxiii. 14. 1 King. ii. 2.) or their leaving the World, as others had done before them, (as most Words and Expressions are often used improperly) and may in some places be applied to ill Men; yet there could never have been any Reason

ⁿ Vid. Outr. de Sacrific. lib. i. c. 15: §. 6.

^o Cum imagini tue (quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulachris vuminum afferri) thure ac vino supplicarent. Plin. l. x. ad Trajan. Ep. 97. Numa instituit Deos fruge colere, & molâ salsa supplicare. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xviii. c. 2.

^p Philo Jud. Quis rerum Divin. Hæres?

or Foundation for such a Phrase, but from a supposition of the Soul's Immortality. *Balaam* wish'd to die the death of the Righteous, and that his last End might be like that of the Righteous, *Numb.* xxiii. 10. For what reason, but that he might not be miserable, but happy after Death?

A future State was always believ'd by the Jews, as revealed to them in the Old Testament; and whatever Texts there may be, which seem to imply the contrary, they are either spoken only by way of Objection, as in the Book of *Ecclesiastes*; for a future State and Judgment are afterwards expressly asserted, *Eccl.* iii. 21. xi. 9. xii. 7, 14. The Preacher makes Observations and Reflections upon the state of human Life; and then concludes, that *this is the whole Duty of Man, to fear God and keep his Commandments*, in certain belief and expectation of a Judgment to come; Or else they have no relation to the state after this Life, either to affirm, or deny it; but are to be understood to proceed from that desire, which pious Men had to honour and glorifie God in their several Generations, by restoring his Worship, where it had been neglected, or in propagating his Religion, where it had not been yet known. Thus that good King *Hezekiah* says to God in his Thanksgiving, *The Grave cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the Pit, cannot hope for thy Truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: The Father to the Children shall make known thy Truth*, *Isa.* xxxviii. 18, 19. This is spoken with the same Zeal and Spirit, by which he was acted in his Reformation. And when *David* said, *In Death, there is no remembrance of thee; in the Grave, who shall give thee Thanks?* *Psal.* vi. 5. He cannot be supposed to have any doubtfulness concerning a future State; for in other *Psalms* he plainly asserts it, *Psal.* xvi. 11. xvii. 15. But his meaning is explain'd, *Psal.* xxx. 9. where he says, *What profit is there in my Blood, when I go down into the Pit?*

Pit ? Shall the Dust praise thee ? Shall it declare thy Truth ? In our other Translation it is, *Shall the Dust give Thanks to thee ?* To give Thanks then to God, is in grateful acknowledgment for his Mercies, to praise and magnifie his Name, add manifest his Truth among Men, which is not to be done in the Grave. God's Dispensations to the People of *Israel*, being with this design. Pious Men desir'd that their Lives might be prolong'd for this purpose, that they might declare his Truth, and vindicate and promote his Honour in this World, before they were call'd to the next, where there can be no opportunity for this service to God, and benefit to Mankind. *O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this Generation, and thy Power to every one that is to come*, Psal. lxxi. 18. *I shall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the Lord*, Psal. cxviii. 17. Good Men are sometimes said no longer to be, when they are taken out of this World; *Enoch walked with God, and was not, i. e. he was no longer in this World; for God took him*. Gen. v. 24. And when *David* prays, *O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more*, Psal. xxxix. it is well explained in our other Translation. *Before I go hence, and be no more seen*. In the same manner, *Jacob* speaks not only of *Joseph*, whom he thought to be dead, but of *Simeon*, who was left for a Pledge in *Ægypt*. *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not*, Gen. xlii. 36. He looked upon both as lost and dead to him, and made no more account of them, as to any comfort he could expect from them, than if they had had no Being.

Enoch was taken up alive into Heaven, to be an Example of that Happiness which God has prepar'd for those who walk with him, and please him, Gen. v. 24. And the Soul of the Widow's Son, who was restored to Life by *Elijah*, is said to come again into him; 1 Kings xvii. 21, 22. which implies, that the Soul does not perish at the time of Death, but only departs

out of the Body. And our Saviour, *Mark* xii. 26. proves the Resurrection of the Dead from *Exod.* iii. 6. Those, whom God *knew by Name*, found particular favour in his Sight, *Exod.* xxxiii. 12. and those for whom God has that peculiar Favour, as to stile himself *their God*, and to declare this to be *his Name* or Title for ever, and this to be *his Memorial unto all Generations*, *Exod.* iii. 15. we may be assured are not so dead, as utterly to have perish'd: and if their Souls have surviv'd their Bodies, their Bodies likewise must be raised again; forasmuch as the Soul of *Abraham*, without his Body, is not *Abraham*, but only one part of him: and his Soul could not be stil'd *Abraham*, but with respect not only to its past, but to its future Union with his Body: For tho' a part be often put for the whole, yet it always supposes either the present or future Existence of the Whole, but is never put for the Whole, when it remains alone, and the rest is utterly and finally extinct. *Abraham* consists of Soul and Body; and therefore God being the God of *Abraham*, is God both of the Soul and Body of *Abraham*; which is an argument that the Soul of *Abraham* now lives, and that his Body shall live again; *for all live to God*. And he would not have given himself a solemn Title and Denomination from a Man who had no longer any Being; nor from that part of him, which had utterly perish'd. *I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. *Abraham* had his Name in token that he should be a Father of many Nations, *Gen.* xvii. 5. and *Isaac* and *Jacob* were Heirs of the same Promise; and therefore the God of *Abraham* is the God of that Father of Nations, and has a particular regard to the Bodies (from which those Nations were descended) as well as to the Souls of *Abraham* and his Posterity. *I am the God of Abraham*, not *I was*, but *I am*, which supposes *Abraham* yet to be. *I am the same God still to him*, that *I* was during his Life upon Earth; he is still the Object of

of the Divine Care and Goodness, and therefore shall be rewarded both in Body and Soul. *God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a City,* Heb. xi. 16. that is, an Habitation in Heaven. The Scribes express'd their approbation of this Argument us'd by our Saviour: *Then certain of the Scribes answering, said, Master thou hast well said,* Luk. xx. 39.

The Children of *Israel*, before the giving of the Law, were instructed in the Rewards and Punishments of the Life to come; and temporal Rewards and Punishments were appointed by *Moses*, as Pledges and Types to represent and prefigure to them those of a future state. For that *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs before him, had a true and full notion of a Life after this, we are certain from *Heb. xi. 10, 13.* And we have as great certainty, that *Abraham* did instruct his Children and his Household after him, *Gen. xviii. 19.* and *Moses* wrote of Christ, *Joh. v. 46. Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15, 18.*

These things were delivered in the Books of *Moses*, and well understood by the generality of the *Jews* in all Ages; the *Sadducees* were singular in denying the Resurrection of the Dead, and some other Doctrines, in which all the rest were agreed. *Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection,* Heb. xi. 35. 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29. But if there were any obscurity or difficulty in the Books of *Moses*, they had besides the Priests, a constant succession of Prophets for many Ages, to interpret them, and to maintain and inculcate those Fundamental Doctrines of Religion. The Rewards of Heaven are declared, *Psal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15. Prov. xv. 24. Eccles. xii. 14. Dan. xii. 2, 3.* The Torments of Hell are asserted, *Psal. xvi. 10. Eccles. xi. 9. xii. 14. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Dan. xii. 2.* The Resurrection of the Dead, *Psal. xvii. 15. Isa. xxvi. 19. Ezek. xxxvii. 1. Dan. xii. 2.*

Hof. xiii. 14. And in the Book of *Job*, which is of greatest Antiquity, *Job* xiv. 12. xix. 26, 27. In that Expression that *David* and others *slept with their Fathers*, is implied not only the Immortality of the Soul, but the Resurrection of the Body: For it implies, that there was not a total end of them, but as they slept, so must they awake and rise again, *Psal.* xvii. 15. And this Expression is taken from the Old Testament, and applied to the same sense in the New. Of the assistance of Divine Grace, we are taught, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *Psal.* xxv. 4. xxvii. 11. li. 10, 11, 12. lxxxvi. 11. cxix. 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135. cxliii. 10. *Prov.* i. 23. *Isa.* xlv. 3. lix. 21. *Jer.* xxxi. 8. xxxii. 40. *Ezek.* xi. 19. xxxvi. 26, 27. Our Saviour speaking of Regeneration, says to *Nicodemus*, *Art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these things?* *John* iii. 10. and he bids the *Jews* *search the Scriptures* of the Old Testament; *for in them*, says he, *ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me*, *John* v. 39. It was in them foretold, that a much clearer Revelation was to be made by the Gospel, *Jer.* xxxi. 31. When our Saviour, by his Resurrection, gave a fuller manifestation of a future immortal state than could be given by any other means, and *brought Life and Immortality to light thro' the Gospel*, *2 Tim.* i. 10. Yet this it self was typified in the Old Testament, by raising Dead Men to Life again; and the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah* into Heaven, was for a Testimony and Assurance of a future state both of Body and Soul. Besides all which, from the frequent mention of the Appearance of Angels in the Books of *Moses*, as well as in the rest of the Old Testament, it follows plainly, that there is another World, and a future State. The *Sadducees*, and all of the same Principles with them, have ever been so sensible of this consequence, that they *believe neither Angel, nor Spirit*, *Acts* xxiii. 8. It could be upon no other Principle, but a persuasion that Souls survive after the Death

of

of their Bodies, that *Saul* desired *Samuel's* Ghost to be brought up to him, 1 Sam. xxviii. 11. And the Laws against familiar Spirits, in the Books of *Moses*, suppose that there are Spirits as well as Men in the World, *Levit.* xix. 31. xx. 6. *Deut.* xviii. 11. For what the *Jews* understood by familiar Spirits, we understand from *Saul's* Practice; and Facts are the best Interpreters of Words, whatever some Criticks may pretend.

The Doctrine delivered by *Moses*, and the Prophets, was as effectual a caution and warning to Men, to keep them from the place of Torments, as a Message from the Dead could have been, *Luke* xvi. 31. The Old Testament, therefore, is not deficient in any necessary Point of Salvation; but the Ceremonial Law was enjoined, as a suitable help and expedient for the retaining those Truths which had been revealed before. Which was so well known, ^q that *Celsus* puts this as an Objection into the Mouth of the *Jews*, whom he brings in arguing against the Christian Religion, that it taught them nothing but what they knew before, concerning the Resurrection of the Dead, and a future Judgment, and a state of Rewards and Punishments in another World. And it cannot be denied, that the *Apocryphal* ^r, as well as the *Canonical* Books, teach these things: And that the ^s *Rabbins* teach the Resurrection of the Dead, and a future state of Rewards and Punishments, as fundamental Articles of Faith, which are contained in those now cited, and other Texts of the Old Testament.

The Honour and Authority of our Religion amongst Men, depends very much upon a right knowledge and a due consideration of this Subject. And those who profess never so great veneration for the New Testament, but have little esteem for any part of the Old,

^q Origen. contra Cels. lib. 2. ^r Vid. 2 Macc. vii.

^s If, Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. 1, 15.

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understand neither the one nor the other as they ought. They refer all along to each other, and must stand or fall together; for the one is but a Draught as it were, or Model of the other; all things being though obscurely, yet sufficiently taught in the Old Testament, which are fully and lively express'd in the New.

The Sum of all is this: The Faith in the *Messias* to come, and the Principles of Religion and Morality had been delivered down from the beginning by *Adam* and *Noah* to their Posterity: And when *Moses*, by God's direction and appointment, gave Laws to the Children of *Israel*, the end and design of these Laws was the preservation of this Faith and Practice amongst them. And this was effected by visible Objects and sensible Remembrances; the *Jewish* Dispensation was ordain'd in condescension to the circumstances and capacities of those Ages and that Nation, in such a manner as was most suitable to their Condition, and most worthy of God; the rest of the World had wholly given up and abandon'd themselves to Carnal Ordinances and Superstitions; and God, who produceth Good out of Evil, made use of this Fondness and Dotage of Mankind to the Preservation and Advancement of Truth and Holiness amongst Men. The Ceremonial Worship was no farther acceptable to God, and no otherwise design'd by him, than to keep his People from running into Idolatry, to which they had so great a Proneness, to put them in mind of their own Sinfulness and Unworthiness, to preserve a Sense of Moral Duties, and of an inward and spiritual Service; and to retain a Remembrance and Expectation of that *Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction*, which had been foretold, and was in the *fulfulness of time* to be offer'd upon the Cross for the Sins of the World.

Thanks be to God, that we are instructed to worship him *in Spirit and in Truth*, without so many burthensome Ceremonies; but in those Ages of the World, nothing would have seem'd more strange and
absurd,

absurd, than a Religion without some Pomp and Solemnity of Ceremonies: And God appointed for his People those which were innocent, to restrain them from all that were wicked and hurtful; He appointed the Sacrifices of Beasts to be Types of Christ's Sacrifice, and to withhold them from Humane Sacrifices, which were practis'd in other Nations, and enjoin'd by other Religions; he commanded them to abstain from certain Meats, that they might not eat of things offer'd to Idols, and these innocent Ceremonies he made useful and serviceable to the great ends of Faith and Righteousness. Nothing impracticable can be supposed to be prescrib'd by God to any People; nothing which is above their Abilities and present Attainments, and therefore would be of no use and benefit to them. But rather the Divine Goodness would condescend to their Infirmities, and comply with them in giving them such Laws, as may be agreeable and convenient for them in their present state, and may fit them for an higher and more excellent Dispensation. Whatsoever we may think of it now, nothing at the time when the Law was given, would have look'd like Religion, that had been without abundance of Rites and Ceremonies. And herein the Wisdom of God appears, that to such a People, and in such an Age, he gave a Law so admirably proper, and well contriv'd to preserve the Life and Substance of Religion under the Veil of Ceremonies, and to prepare them for the coming of his Son, when it was to be of no longer continuance. *The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. that is, the Grace of the Gospel, and the Truth and Reality or Substance of those things, which were prefigur'd by the Law.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the Cessation of the Jewish Law.

OUR Saviour was the *Great Prophet*, who was to come, as *Moses* had foretold, and who was expected at the time of *His Coming*; and it was likewise expected, that that Prophet should work Miracles, as *Moses* had done, whom he was to be like, and he was to be a Lawgiver, as *Moses* had been. The *Jews* had a general Expectation that the *Messiah* would manifest himself by Miracles, *John vii. 31.* Miracles had not been for a long time wrought in the *Jewish Church*, but it was receiv'd as a known and undoubted Truth, that they were to be revived by Him. The ^a *Rabbins* still teach, that the Gifts of Miracles and Prophecy are to return at the coming of the *Messiah*, according to God's exprefs Promise: And the *Samaritans* themselves had this Notion of the *Messiah*, that he was to give full Instructions in all things relating to the Worship of God, *Joh. iv. 25.* And the Prophecies concerning the Birth, and Life, and Death of Christ, in all things necessary to prove him the true *Messiah*, were literally fulfill'd in our Saviour, and those things which concern the Nature of his Kingdom, have been explain'd by him and his Apostles. So that it being fully prov'd, that Jesus is the Christ by the Accomplishment in Him of the Ancient Prophecies concerning the *Messiah*, we ought to rest satisfy'd in his Authority, both for the Cessation of the Law of *Moses*, and for any Explication which He and his Apostles have given us of it. The ^b *Jews* acknowledge, that
the

^a Maimon. More Nevoch. Part ii. c. 36.

^b Atque sic didicimus per Traditionem à priscis Sapiëntibus. In qualibet re, cum dixerit tibi Propheta; Transgredere verba legis, sicut

the Prophets had Authority to dispense with the Law in all things, but Idolatry ; notwithstanding the Prohibition, neither to add to it, nor diminish from it, (*Deut. iv. 2.*) though no Exception is made of any Privilege to be granted to the Prophets, more than to other Men in this case. But they say, ^c that the Power of the Prophets reach'd only to a Temporary Dispensation, and gave them no Warrant to abolish any part of the Law. Which is true : But this Power in the Prophets, who were but Types of Christ, signify'd, that the *Messiah* himself was to have a more extensive Power, and to come with full Authority to institute a New Covenant instead of the Law, which was but a Type of it, as *Moses* was of Christ. But this is not all : we are able to prove against the *Jews* from the Books of the Old Testament, that their Law was to cease, when the *Messiah* was come.

The Gospel is so far from containing any thing contrary to the Law, that it is the Fulfilling and Accomplishment of it. The Moral Precepts are improv'd and advanc'd, and the Ceremonial and Ritual Part was not properly abrogated and abolish'd, but it continued for as long time as it was design'd to do, and then expir'd of it self ; it serv'd those Ends for which it was instituted, and afterwards must of consequence cease. The Ceremonial Worship therefore was permitted to the *Jews*, who became Converts to the Christian Faith, till the Destruction of their City and Temple, and then it was no longer practicable,

cut Elihu fecit in monte Carmel, audi eum, præterquam in Idolatria. *Cum videlicet aliquid pro certo tempore futurum est. Sicut Elihu obtulit holocaustum in extraneo loco, licet Jerusalem ad hoc electa esset.* Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, c. ix. §. 6, 7. Præf. in Seder. Zeraim. p. 10.

^c Si mandaverint omnes Propheta, ut violemus Præceptum pro tempore, tum audiendi sunt ; sin verò dixerint, verbum hoc in æternum excisum esse, tunc strangulandi sunt, quia Lex semper nobis nostrisque filiis loquitur. Id. de Fund. Leg. §. 7.

but

but must of necessity cease ; and the Cessation of the Law of *Moses*, when once it had its Period and Accomplishment, was as much the Will of the Legislator, as its first Institution, as its former Obligation could be.

The *Jewish* Law being Figurative and Typical, it follows, that it was to cease of course, when the Things prefigur'd and typify'd by it, should be brought to pass, that is, when the *Messiah* should come. For then the Types and Figures being fulfill'd, could be of no longer use, nor the Law which enjoin'd them, of any longer continuance, when once this principal Reason of it ceas'd, and all other ends design'd by it might be better attain'd without it, by the Worship of God *in Spirit and in Truth*. And this Law was so contrived, as not only to expire upon the fulfilling of it by the *Messiah*, but to become impracticable and impossible to be observ'd afterwards. I shall therefore prove the Cessation of the *Jewish* Law:

- I. Because the *Messiah* is come, in whom it was fulfill'd.
- II. Because it was foretold by the Prophets, that the Law should cease upon the coming of the *Messiah*.
- III. Because after the coming of the *Messiah*, it was to become impracticable and impossible to be observ'd.

I. The *Messiah* is come, in whom the Law is fulfill'd. As the coming of the *Messiah* was prefigur'd in the various Types and Ceremonies of the Law, which were therefore to receive their Accomplishment in him, so it is manifest that our Saviour is the *Messiah*, since the Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* have been all fulfill'd in Him. This has been already prov'd at large; and the Prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Malachi* are so very plainly and undeniably fulfill'd, that ^d some of the *Jews*, to evade them, have been forc'd to say, that the *Messiah* was born before the Destruction of the second Temple, tho' he doth

^d Munster. de Messia.

not yet appear; but that he was seen at *Rome*, and has ever since lain conceal'd, as *Moses* did in the House of *Pharaoh*; and that the time will come, when he shall require the Dismission of the *Jews* from the *Pope*, as *Moses* demanded of *Pharaoh* the Dismission of the Children of *Israel*. But they say, that he defers the Manifestation of himself, by reason of their Sins; and upon this account they have made many solemn Humiliations, to implore his Help, and hasten his Coming; particularly *A. D. MDII.* they appointed a publick Humiliation for Young and Old, Men, Women and Children, in all parts of the World, for nigh a whole Year together. ^c *Trypho* did not deny that Christ was born, and might be somewhere unknown, but said, that he could not know himself to be Christ, nor work Miracles, till *Elias* had anointed him, and manifested him to the World. ^f Others have said, that there is to be a Third Temple, and during the time of the last, the Messiah will come, only because *Abraham* call'd the Place where the Temple stood, a Mountain, *Isaac* a Field, and *Jacob* an House. Some are of Opinion, that their Sins hinder his Coming; some again think, that they are neither sinful enough, nor righteous enough: For, ^g say they, he must come in a Generation altogether sinful, or altogether righteous. The second Temple appear'd as *nothing in comparison of the Glory of the first*, when *Haggai* foretold, that the *Glory of this latter House should be greater thn of the former*, Hag. ii. 3, 9. It has been a constant Tradition among the *Jews*, that the second Temple was in five respects inferior to the first; since it had neither the Fire from Heaven, nor the Anointing Oil, nor the Ark, nor the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of Prophecy and Miracles, nor *Urim* and *Thummim*. So that the se-

^c Just Martyr Dialog. ^f Munster. ib. ^g Non veniet filius David, nisi ad generationem, cujus omnes vel sunt puri, vel impuri. Abravanel de cap. Fidei, c. xiv.

cond Temple being in all these respects inferior to the first, could, according to *Haggai's* Prophecy (*ch. ii. 9.*) excel that, only in the Privilege of Christ's Presence in it. This is an Argument, says ^h one very conversant in the Rabbinical Writings, to which the Jews can find nothing to reply. And a ⁱ Rabbin of great Note has, from more Ancient Expositors, declar'd *the Glory of this latter House*, to be meant of *Spiritual Glory*.

The Prophecy of *Daniel's* Weeks is so punctually in all its Circumstances fulfill'd, that not only ^k *Josephus* and the modern *Jews* apply it to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, but ^l some of the *Jews*, when they could not deny the Computation to be true, and to agree exactly wth the time of our Saviour's Birth, have even dar'd to say, that *Daniel* himself was mistaken in the Account; others have confess'd that all the Terms of Time assign'd for the coming of the *Messiah* are past, and that now their only Hopes of Deliverance and Redemption are to be placed in their Repentance. But ^m Rabbi *Nehumias* who liv'd fifty years before Christ, declared that the Coming of the *Messiah*, according to *Daniel's* Prophecy, could not be deferr'd beyond the space of fifty years longer, as *Grotius* has observ'd from the *Talmud*. We are ⁿ told, that the *Jews* are all agreed in the Thirteen Articles of Faith drawn up by *Maimonides*, in his Commentary upon the *Misna*; insomuch that ^o whoever disbelieves any one of these Articles, has renounced his Religion. And the Twelfth Article contains, that no Time for

^h Bochart. Hieroz. Pt. i. l. 2. c. 35.

ⁱ R. Moses Elfach Comment. in Hag. ii. apud Vorst. Not. in Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. xiv.

^k Joseph. Antiq. Jud. l. x. c. 12. *Secundum Scriptum Judai* apud Limborch.

^l Lud. Viv. de ver. Fid. l. iii.

^m Grot. de Verit. lib. v. §. 14. & inter Sarrav. Epist.

ⁿ Leo Moden. c. ult.

^o Rabb. Abraham. Jagel Catechism. Jud. p. 6.

the Coming of the *Messiah* is to be prefix'd, or determin'd, from any Explication of Scripture, inasmuch as the ^p Rabbins had denounced a Curse upon all, who should presume to compute the Time. ^q One, who is believ'd to have been too much addicted to Judaism, has declared that the Talmudists and modern Jews, to maintain their Religion against Christians, have perverted both Chronology and History, in Contradiction to *Philo* and *Josephus*, as well as to all other Authors. Divers ^r of the Jews place the Passion of Christ sixty nine years before our common Account of the year in which he truly suffer'd; others pretend another different Account without the least Reason for either pretence, but this shews how desperate a cause they are engaged in, which forceth them upon such Artifices; for we have the express Testimony of *Tacitus*, that he suffered under *Pontius Pilate*. † Indeed the Jews know nothing of the History of their own Nation; having no Historians since *Esdra*, till M.C. Years after the Incarnation of Christ, except *Josephus*, of whom they have no knowledge, or no regard for him. They interpret *Isa. vii. 14.* where it is prophesied that the *Messiah* was to be born of a Virgin, contrary to the sense of their Fore-fathers, and therefore reject the ancient Translation of that Verse by the *Septuagint*, as

^p *Quemadmodum dixere Sapp. cel. m. in cap. Cheleck. illaqueetur animus supputantium terminos. Maimon. apud Abravanel. de cap. Fid. cap. i.*

^q *Talmudici suæ sectæ nimium addicti, ut divinas sortes & oracula suo judicio interpretarentur, ducentos annos de ætate mundi detraxerunt, ne cum Christianis convenirent. Bodin. Method. Hist. c. viii. Nimis enim pertinaces Hebræi juniores tempora Danielis depravarunt, ut contra omnium Scriptorum fidem enumerent quinque duntaxat imperatores Persarum.—sed id fecerunt, ne ab oraculis Prophetae perperam intellectis recedere viderentur. Hos igitur refellere necesse est tum Josephi & Philonis auctoritate, tum etiam orbium cælestium motu, &c. Ibid.*

^r *Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. iv.*

† *Morin. de Ordinationib. Part. 3. Exercit. 7. c. iv. §. 18.*

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^r Justin Martyr urged against the Jews of his time ; and ^t Irenæus, after him, against the Ebionites. The Jews likewise, instead of *they pierced my hands, and my feet*, read, *like a Lion my hands, and my feet*, by a change of *Jod* for *Vau*. The whole Verse is thus ; *For Dogs have compassed me, the Assembly of the Wicked have enclosed me, like a Lion, my hands, and my feet*, Psal. xxii. 16. which not only makes no Sense, nor is capable of any tolerable Exposition, as appears by the absurd ^u Comments of *Kimchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and other *Rabbins* upon it, but agrees not with *Aquila*, and is contrary to the *Septuagint*, and to the *Hebrew Text*, acknowledged by their own ^x *Masora*, which was compiled in the sixth Century. The alteration was made,

^r Just. Mart. Dialog.

^t Iren. l. iii. c. 24.

^u Bochart. Hieroz. Part. 1. l. iii. c. 6. ^x Fuller. Misc. l. iii. Pearson. Art. v.

In parvo Massoreth legitur duo Caari reperiri in Telischnah, i. e. in diversâ significatione, nimirum illud, quod Ps. xxi, xxii. legitur, & alterum in versu—quem invenire licet Esaiæ cap. 38. Cum ergo ista duo Caari non sint ejusdem significationis, oportet unum esse verbum, alterum verò nomen, vel certè aliâ in re differre. Huc accedit, quòd Rabbi Jaacob filius Haym, vir doctissimus, in Magno Massoreth, in Maarecheth Aleph sic scribat.

—“ In quibusdam libris correctis inveni scriptum, in Textu “ Caaru & Lecto sc. in margine erat Caari. “ Hoc idem ego Johannes Isaac ipsâ veritate & bonâ conscientia testari possum, quòd hujusmodi Psalterium apud avum meum viderim, ubi in Textu scriptum erat Caaru, & in margine Caari : & ita omnia olim exemplaria habuisse haud dubito. Hinc itaque manifestum esse puto, cur Septuaginta & alii transtulerint, foderunt, siquidem illi non Keri, sed Ketif sunt secuti.—Proinde extra omnem controversiam esse debet in Textu Caaru, in margine verò Caari legendum. Sed impii Judei quidam (quod intra 600 annorum spatium contigisse arbitror) vocabulum in margine notatum Textui inseruerunt, id vero quod in contextu scriptum erat, Sc. Caaru, omnino omiserunt. Neque verò tam enormitèr se peccare existimaverunt, cum maxima eorum pars in Massoreth non fuerit exercitata & versata, & Keri & Ketif, propter dubia facta esse crediderit. Qua propter utrum legerent parùm interesse putabant. Fuernnt autem hujus rei auctores quidam indocti, qui, cum viderent se magis Caaru urgeri, quam

made, as *Jo. Isaacus Levita* * supposes, about seven hundred years ago, first in the lesser Bibles, for the use of Children, and the vulgar People, and by degrees it got into the rest. These Texts, one proving Christ's Birth of a Virgin, the other, his Death by the Cross, are expounded by us according to their own ancient and most authentick Interpreters. In *Origen's* time they expounded *Isa. liii.* of the Nation of the *Jews*, not of any particular Person; though, as *Origen* argued in a Disputation with them, the tenor of the whole Chapter is a plain confutation of this way of expounding it, and especially these words of the 8th Verse, *for the Transgression of my People was he stricken.* By the Person stricken, cannot be understood the People, for whose Transgression he is said to have been stricken.² But they have found out another Evasion, by pretending that there are to be two *Messiahs*, one the Son of *Joseph*, who is to be a suffering *Messiah*, and the other the Son of *David*, who is to enjoy all manner of temporal Prosperity and Power. ^a *Maimonides* endeavours to disprove the sufficiency of Miracles to attest a Divine Mission, pretending that the *Israelites* were not convinced of the Authority of *Moses's* Mission, by his Miracles, but only by the Presence of God upon Mount *Sinai*. Which is expressly contrary to the declared intention of God in the Miracles wrought by *Moses*, and is false in Fact: for the People believed, when the Signs were

quàm Caari, omnino Caaru expunxerunt, Caari verò in ejus locum substituerunt, nihil interim in margine relinquentes. p. III. &c. Defensio veritatis Hebraicæ adv. Lindanum, Auctore Johanne Isaaco Leyita Germano Ampliff. Senatús Colon. Publico Profess. Colon. A. MDLIX.

* *Defens. veritat, Hebraic.*

^y *Origen. contr. Cels. lib. i.*

² *Targ. in Cant. iv. 5. vii. 3. See Grot. ib. lib. v. §. 19. Bishop Pearson ib.*

^a *Israelita non crediderunt Mosi; M. n. propter miracula, quæ patravit, &c. Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, c. 8. §. 1. Unde verò sola statio in monte Sinai est Probatio de Prophetia veritate? ib. §. 3.*

done in their *sight*, Exod. iv. 30, 31. and they never had been so stubborn and rebellious, before the Commandments were given upon Mount *Sinai*, as they were afterwards. For before the Two Tables were brought down to them, they had made the molten Calf. But this is only a contrivance to evade the force of that Argument from the Miracles of our Saviour, which prove him to be the *Messiah*, according to express Prophecies. ^b *Maimonides* was in such a perplexity in the case, that he sometimes affirms, and sometimes denies, that the *Messiah* would work Miracles; and at other times, attempts to invalidate the design and effect of them.

So plain is it, that the Prophecies which the *Jews* themselves of old understood of Christ, are fulfilled in our Saviour, and so unavoidably do they contradict all their own ancient Interpretations of Scripture, when they will not allow them to be fulfilled in him: For that they are fulfilled, it is evident; and they can assign no other Person in whom they have been fulfilled. No wonder therefore if they have destroyed, † when they could, such Writings of their *Rabbins*, as made against them.

II. It was foretold by the Prophets, that the Law should cease upon the coming of the *Messiah*. It is evident from the Prophets, that in some Years after Christ, *Jerusalem* was to be no longer the seat of the *Jewish* Power and Government, nor the place of Worship. And their Prophecies suppose the Cessation of the *Jewish* Law upon a two-fold account: 1. From the Destruction of the Temple. 2. From the Dispersion of the People of the *Jews*, and the Destruction of their City.

^b In Misn. apud Vorst. not. in Abravan. de cap. Fidei, c. 14.

† *Illa Rabboth, quæ Moses Hardasan composuerat, sunt à Judæis, quantum apparet, abolita, quod nostris mysteriis viderentur favere in multis locis.* Mas. de Nominib. Auctorum & Librorum, quibus in Comment. in Jos. usus est.

1. From the Destruction of the Temple. The Prophet *Daniel* foretold, that after the *Messiah* was cut off, the *Sanctuary* should be *destroyed*, and the *Sacrifice* and the *Oblation* should *cease*, and that there should be *Desolation even until the Consummation*, *Dan. ix. 26, 27*. Since the *Sanctuary* is laid waste, and desolate, and by this Prophecy is never to be rebuilt, the Temple being the place of all their Worship and Solemnities; that failing, their whole Worship must fail with it. And whenever the *Jews* have attempted to rebuild their Temple, they have been hindred from doing it, and particularly (as I have several times already observed) in the time of *Julian* the Apostate, by miraculous and dreadful Judgments, related by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, an Heathen Historian, who lived at that time, and by a ^e *Jewish* Writer. And when they have been permitted to build them Synagogues and Places of Worship in all other Parts of the World, that Place alone has been denied them in which by their Law they were indispensably bound to worship. The Morning and Evening Sacrifice was to be at the Temple. The High Priest was to enter into the Holy Place once every Year, with the Blood of one Sin-offering for himself, and of another for the People, *Exod. xxx. 10. Levit. xvi. 2*. All the Males were obliged to resort to *Jerusalem*, to worship thrice every Year; and the place of their Worship was more strictly enjoined than the time. For if any Man were upon a Journey, or Unclean, a second Passover was appointed for him, but it could be observed at no other place but *Jerusalem*, upon any occasion whatsoever, *Numb. ix. 10. Deut. xvi. 5*. And therefore, during the Captivity at *Babylon*, they did not celebrate these Feasts of the *Passover*, of *Pentecost*, and of *Tabernacles*; *Daniel* was so far from keeping the Feast of the *Passover*, that he

^e Wagenfeil. Annot. ad excerpta Gemaræ, cap. i. p. 236.

fasted *three whole Weeks of the first Month*, Dan. x. 2, 3, 4. How could they *sing the Lord's Song in a strange Land?* Psal. cxxxvii. 4. ^d Cestius took Lydda without any opposition, when the People were gone to keep the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem. And the Siege of Jerusalem by Titus, which ended in the Destruction both of the City and Temple, was begun at the time of the Passover, when the whole Nation, says ^e Josephus, was, by Fate, shut up together, as in a Prison, and the crowded City was surrounded with War. These were signs that they were no longer God's peculiar People, nor under the protection of those Promises, which by the Law were made to them, and had ever been fulfilled till the time of the Promise was expired. ^f St. Chrysostom blames the Jews of his time, for observing the Law in the Countries whither they were dispersed, which he proves to be contrary to God's Commandment, and to the Practice of their Ancestors. Julian says, that the Jews did in ^g some places sacrifice, tho' they could not perform that Worship as the Law prescribed. But they seem to have sacrificed rather to please him, than of their own accord: for ^h he complains, that they were very backward in offering Sacrifices, because their Temple was destroyed, and therefore he designed to rebuild it. Which was a thing he had so much at heart, that he had ⁱ resolved to attempt it again, if he had returned victorious from Persia. The modern Jews confess, that their Worship is impracticable in their present condition; they acknowledge, that they ought to offer Sacrifice

^d Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 23.

^e Ib. l. vii. c. 17.

^f Chrys. adv. Judæos, lib. i. Tom. 6. Sav. Edit.

^g Οὐστὶ μὲν ἐν Ἀδρατῷ Ἰουδαῖοι. Jul. apud Cyr. l. ix. p. 305.

Interpres vertit, sacrificant quidem in suis domibus Judæi. Intelligendum verò de Adrato, in Arabiâ Petreâ, Palestine confini, vel de aliâ quâdam urbe; cum præsertim, nec ubique, nec sponte suâ, sed Juliano potiùs auctore, sacrificia obtulisse Judæi videantur.

^h Ib. p. 324.

ⁱ Jul. Epist. 25. Fragment. Epist. p. 295.

no where else but at the Temple of *Jerusalem*; the observation of the Passover among them now, is without sacrificing the Paschal Lamb; they keep the Feasts of *Pentecost* and *Tabernacles* without the appointed Sacrifices; and they observe the Day of Atonement without the Sacrifice of Expiation.

2. The Destruction of the City of *Jerusalem*, and the final Dispersion of the whole Nation of the *Jews* proves, that their Law is at an end. *Jacob* plainly foretold both the coming of the *Messiah*, and the end of the Power and Authority of the Nation of the *Jews* upon his coming. *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be,*^k or, *he is the expectation of the Nations or Gentiles,* Gen. xlix. 10. ^l This Prophecy was by the ancient *Jews* always understood of the *Messiah*, as is evident by the *Targums*; and it appears to be fulfil'd in our Saviour, both because the *Jewish* Government in his time was drawing towards its final Period, and because the People of all Nations have been gather'd to him, and have been made Proselytes to his Religion. The Sovereignty was in due time to be placed in the Tribe of *Judah*; which was fulfilled in *David's* being advanced to the Kingdom: And from that time, the *Sceptre* and the *Law-giver*, that is, the Power of their Arms, and the Authority of their Laws, was not so to depart, as to become extinct, till the *Messiah* came; which implies, that soon

^k καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ δόξια ἐθνῶν. Septuag. Et ipse erit expectatio Gentium. vulgat. καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ δόξια καὶ ἰσχυρίων ἀλλὰ ἐθνῶν. Cyril. Hier. Catech. xii. Targ. Onkel. ei obedient Populi. Targ. Hier. Ei subjicientur tandem omnia Regna terre.

^l Non cessabunt Reges & Praesides ex domo Juda, & Scriba docentes legem ex semine ejus, usque ad tempus quo veniet Rex Messias. Targ. Jonath. B. Uziel. Non deficient Reges de domo Juda, neque periti Doctores Legis de filiis filiorum ejus usque ad tempus, quo veniet Rex Messias. Targ. Hierosol.

after his coming, they were both to cease, as we see they have long since actually done. The accomplishment of *Jacob's* Prophecy was gradual; *Herod* was of another Nation, but a Profelyte, and upon that account he might be stil'd a *Jew*; as ^m *Isaac Casaubon* has prov'd against *Baronius*: And when he was by the *Romans* made King of the *Jews*, this was as a Warning to awaken them to expect the full Accomplishment of this Prophecy, which was brought to pass in the final Destruction of their Government. The *Jewish* Government all along, under all changes, was still denominated from *Judah*, tho' that Tribe was not always in chief Power; and even under *Herod*, who was an *Idumean*, it had its Title from *Judah*; as the *Roman* Empire retain'd its old Denomination, when divers of the Emperors were not *Romans* by Birth, and the *Jews* still lived under their own Laws, tho' in subjection to the *Romans*. But when the *Messiah* was come, the Sceptre was to depart from *Judah*, and there was no more to be any Legislative Power remaining to the People, who had been so long known under that Denomination, which they receiv'd from him. ⁿ *Archilaus* held his Government of the *Romans* despoiled of all Royal Power; and after Ten Years he was banish'd, and *Judea* was made a Province of the Empire.

And this Prophecy of *Jacob*, in which he foretels the condition of the several Tribes, has a plain Reference to the Promised Land, and is to be understood of the *Jewish* Government in the Land of *Canaan*; for he there describes the Borders of it. From the time that they were in possession of that Land, the People of the *Jews* never had lost all their Right and Title to it, before the coming of *Christ*, but still retain'd their Right, during their abode in *Babylon*, and were

^m Exercitat. 1. Num. 5. ⁿ Joseph. Antiq. l. xvii. c. 13, 15.

assur'd that they should again be put in possession after a Captivity of seventy Years; and in token of this, *Jeremiah* purchased a Field of *Hanameel*, his Uncle's Son, and subscribed and sealed the Writings, and took Witnesses, and paid down the Money publicly before all the Jews that sat in the Court of the Prison, and the Evidences were to be kept in an Earthen Vessel. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the G.d of Israel, Horses, and Fields, and Vineyards, shall be possess'd again in this Land, *Jer. xxxii. 14.* But when the time of *Jacob's* Prophecy was expir'd, and *Shiloh* was come, they were driven out, never to be restor'd again.

The Romans, the most generous of any People, dealt so hardly with no other Nation as with the Jews, who yet had to do with one of the most merciful Princes that stands upon record in History. If *Tiberius*, or *Caligula*, or *Nero*, had destroyed them, it might have been ascrib'd to the cruelty of their Temper; but when *Titus*, who endeavour'd to save them, was by their own obstinacy forc'd upon their Destruction, after they had by their Dissentions made themselves a Prey to him, there was the visible Hand of God in it; as ^o *Josephus* often confesses, and as ^p *Titus* himself declar'd, when he beheld the Towers and Fortifications after the City was taken. If they could have agreed, either in their own defence, or in any terms of submission to him, they would have been far from suffering in that Extremity. When *Pompey* and *Crassus* entred *Jerusalem*, the time of its Destruction was not yet come, but it was reserv'd to *Titus*, whose peculiar Character it was, that he oblig'd all Men, and who was stil'd the Love and Delight of Mankind, unwillingly to do that which neither *Pompey* nor *Crassus* would do. It is well urg'd by a ^q learned Jew, tho' he makes a wrong Inference from it. Did the same

^o De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 10, 11, 16. ^p Ib. l. vii. c. 16.

^q Secundum scriptum Judæi apud Limbroch.

thing, says he, befall any other People? Did the Romans drive the Germans, the Britains, the Gauls, the Spaniards, the Greeks, or the Asiatick Nations into Captivity, and disperse them throughout all Parts of the World? They rather endeavour'd to preserve them, that their several Countries might not want Inhabitants.

And tho' the Jews have been generally observ'd to have great Riches in the Nations where they live, they have never been able by any power or interest to get themselves re-establish'd in their Country and Government, but have been disappointed as often as they have attempted it, tho' with never so much probability of success. So evident it is by the experience of so many Ages, that however it fares with particular Persons of that Nation, yet they never are to be united again, as a Community, or Body of People, to live under their ancient Laws, according to the Moisaical Constitution. They have no City, no Government, nor ever are to have any; and therefore those Laws can now no longer be in force, which suppose the continuance of their Government. Their Genealogies are lost, upon which the distinction of their Tribes and Families, and the succession of their Priesthood did depend, which has been acknowledged by the ^r learnedst Man, perhaps, that ever was suspected

^r *Soli Hebraei generis antiquitate certissimâ populis omnibus præstant: nemo tamen suam Tribum nunc ciere potest; sed omnes inter se confusi stirpem agnoscunt; ramos ignorant: Gens verò sacerdotum, quæ nobilitatis summum genus ab Aarone repetens, duobus annorum milibus ac trecentis floruerat, Gothicis ac Vandalicis cladibus creditur interiisse, non sine magno Divina Ultionis argumento. Bodin. Method. Hist. c. 9. The Rabbins confess that no Tribe is known, but say that Elias will distinguish the Priests, when he comes. See the Address to the Jews, by Xerxes a Converted Jew, p. 21.*

of apostatizing from Christianity to Judaism, and ^s was confess'd by the Jews themselves to *Joseph Scaliger*; so that they are without an Altar, without a Priest, without a Sacrifice, and without any possibility of knowing the Descent and Lineage of their *Messiah*, whom they expect to come; and by consequence, cannot know him if he should come, having no way to distinguish that Tribe and Family of which the Prophecies declare the *Messiah* was to be. In the *Babylonian Captivity*, *Jehoiachim* had his Throne, 2 *King.* xxv. 28. and still there were Αἰχμαλωτάρχαι, who kept up Order and Government amongst them, *Ezek.* viii. 1 *Ezra.* i. 5. and that, besides, was at the most but a suspension of their Power, it was no utter extirpation of all Rule and Authority; their Genealogies were preserved, and the distinction of their Tribes and Families known; their deliverance out of that Captivity, with the time and manner of it, and the very Name of their Deliverer was foretold, *Isa.* xlv. 28. *Jer.* xxv. 12. *Dan.* ix. 2. And in that Captivity they had Prophets to direct and support them under their Affliction, and give them assurance of a Restoration, but now they do not so much as pretend to have any. The Deliverance of the *Israelites* out of the *Ægyptian* Bondage was likewise foretold, with the punctual time of it, *Gen.* xv. 13, 14. And in general, God declares that when at any time, for their Sins, they

^s Sed neq; certum genus Levitarum aut Sacerdotum habent, quamvis multi Levitarum nomen preferant. Nemo illorum tam confidens est, ut se Levitam verum, aut Sacerdotem dejerare audeat. Quamobrem à nobis interrogati, si illis data esset facultas instaurandi Sanctuarii in monte Moria, ut antea, an victimas immolaturi fuerint, respondebant, frustra hoc fore, quia inquietabant—Non est Sacerdotium hodie in Israel. Itaque etiam instaurato tertium Sanctuario, vocaret λειτουργία, καὶ ὁ ἐνδελεχισμὸς παντὸς ἱεροϋεύματος ἐκλειπότης. Adeò horrendum est illud βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως, quia tametsi locus restituatur, ἐρήμωσις tamen nunquam cessabit. Jos. Scalig. Diatriba de de Decimis Jud, sub finem.

were

were led into Captivity, and dispersed among the Heathens, tho' they were driven unto the utmost part of Heaven, yet upon their repentance he would *turn their Captivity, and have compassion upon them, and would return, and gather them from all the Nations, whither he had scattered them*, Deut. xxx. 2, 3. Nehem. i. 8, 9. And this Promise must have been in force, as long as their Law and Constitution lasted, and could have no limitation but the final and determined period of it. The time for the duration of the *Jewish* Law and Government being expired, all Promises made to them as a distinct People and Nation, must be expired with it; whereas, if their Law were still in force, the promise of their being restored to their Land and Government, would undoubtedly before this time have been fulfilled to them. For besides, that their Sins, at their return from their Captivity in *Babylon*, were very great, it cannot be supposed, that for so many Ages their Sins should hinder that a Remnant at least should not be restored, if the *Jewish* Oeconomy had not received its final period in the destruction of their City and Nation. *Redde statum Judææ, quem Christus inveniat, & alium contendere venire.* This, which was a good Argument in *Tertullian's* time, is improv'd still in every Age since. For if the state of the *Jewish* Nation was not such then as their *Messiah* was to find at his Coming, there is the less cause for them after so long time to hope that they shall ever be restored to such a Condition, as to have any reason to expect him.

III. After the Coming of the *Messiah*, the *Jewish* Law was to become impracticable, and impossible to be observ'd. For if the City and Temple were not destroy'd, the Confinement of the *Jewish* Worship to one certain Place, must necessarily imply an Alteration in their Worship upon the Coming of the *Messiah*,

[†] *Tertul. adv. Judæos, c. 13.*

and the Calling of the *Gentiles*; who could not all be suppos'd to assemble thrice every Year at *Jerusalem*; and therefore the Prophets foretold, that *Jerusalem* should then be no longer the only place of God's Worship, but that Men should worship him in any place of the World. 'Tis true, the Prophets often mention the Resort which should be made from all Nations to *Jerusalem*, and to the Temple, or the *Mountain of the Lord*. But then these are Mystical Expressions; for the City of *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, are us'd by the Prophets as Types of the Christian Church; and therefore *Ezekiel* ^u describes the Temple larger than the whole City of *Jerusalem*, and the City in greater Dimensions than all the Land of *Canaan*, to shew that we are not to understand these Expressions literally. A Priesthood after the Order of *Melchisedek*, different from that of *Aaron*, was prophesied of, *Psal.* cx. 4. and a New Covenant different from that which was made with the Children of *Israel* upon their coming out of the Land of *Ægypt*, *Jerem.* xxxi. 31, 32. And this Covenant was to extend to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*. And it shall come to pass, that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all Flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord, *Isai.* lxvi. 23. For from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the *Gentiles*: and in every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts, *Malach.* i. 11. And the Priesthood was no more to be continu'd to the Tribe of *Levi*, *Isai.* lxvi. 21.

If against all this it be alledg'd, That the *Mosaical* Law was to endure for ever, it ought to be consider'd, what Sense that Expression bears in the Law it self. And that Expression is there used to denote the Continuance of any thing which was not design'd for some

^u Lightfoot's *Prospect of the Temple*, Chap. 2.

particular occasion or season only, but was to last as long as the Nature and general Design of its Institution would admit. The Servant whose Ear was bored, was to serve his Master *for ever*, *Exod. xxi. 6.* by which is to be understood, not all his Life, but only till the Year of Jubilee; whereas he that had not his Ear bored, was to be set free in the seventh Year, *ver. 2.* And even before the Year of Jubilee, he whose Ear was bored, might be freed with his Master's Consent; * either by Manumission, or Redemption, and was at liberty upon the Death of his Master, not being bound to serve his Son. *Their anointing shall surely be an everlasting Priesthood throughout their Generations, Exod. xl. 15.* which can be understood to extend no farther, than as long as their Genealogies were preserv'd, and the Tribe and Generations of the High-Priests could be distinguished. *I will abide in thy Tabernacle for ever, Psal. lxi. 4.* or, in other Words, *all the days of my life, Psal. xxvii. 4.* Samuel was brought by his Mother to abide before the Lord *for ever*; that is, during his Life, *1 Sam. i. 22.* And by parity of Reason those Statutes and Laws are said to be established *for ever*, which were design'd to be perpetual and standing Laws; not temporary, during their journeying in the Wilderness only, as others were, but to continue as long as the Constitution of the Government was to last, and in this Sense the Jews themselves y have taken the Word; and it is sufficiently explain'd, *Deut. xii. 1. These are the Statutes and Judgments which ye shall observe to do in the Land, which the Lord God of thy Fathers giveth thee to possess it all the days that ye live upon the Earth; or, as we read ver. 19. as long as thou livest upon thy Earth; that is, their Law was obligatory to them as long as they had possession of the Land of Canaan, or retain'd any Right to possess it by God's Donation: But those Statutes and*

* Grot. ad loc.

y Id. de Veritat. lib. v. §. 7.

Judgments which were to be observ'd in the Land which the Lord had given them to possess, can no longer be of any Obligation to them, when they are finally depriv'd of that Land. Rabbi *Joseph Albo*, from the Texts now cited, acknowledg'd, that the Perpetuity of the Law of *Moses* could not be prov'd from the Signification of the Word *Olam*; which ^z *Menasseh Ben Israel* cannot deny, but pretends, that there is something particular in this case, as it is apply'd to the Law: because it is not only said, that their Law should be in force for ever, but that it should continue to their Seed for all Generations. The Texts, which he produces are these. *And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations, Gen. xvii. 9. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened Bread, For in this self-same day, have I brought your Armies out of the land of Ægypt. Therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever, Exod. xii. 17. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant, Exod. xxxi. 16.* But if we compare the Texts following, we shall find, that by this Argument the Jews must have been in possession of the promis'd Land to the end of the World, as well as under perpetual Obligations to observe the Law of *Moses*. *For all the land, which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever, Gen. xiii. 15. And I will give unto thee and to thy Seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God, Gen. xvii. 8. Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession, Genes. xlviii. 4.* This was God's solemn and repeated Promise to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, which *Moses* be-

^z *Menass. Ben Isr. Conciliat. in Levit. Qu. 7.*

seech'd God to remember, when he interceded for the Children of *Israel*, after their making the molten Calf. *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants: to whom thou swarest, I will multiply your seed, as the stars of heaven, and all this land, that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever, Exod. xxxii. 13.* From hence it is manifest, that this Argument concludes as much for their being kept in constant Possession of *Canaan*, as for the Duration of their Law: And their having been so long dispossest of that Land, is a Confutation in Fact of all that can be argued to that purpose, either from the Word *Olam*, or from any other Expression. The Land of *Canaan* was given to the Children of *Israel* for an everlasting possession; but this must be understood in a limited Sense: For they have been long out of the Possession of that Land. It is in vain therefore for them to contend, that their Law is of perpetual Obligation, unless they could maintain the perpetual Possession of that Land, in which it was to be observ'd. But it is apparent, that by *everlasting* is to be understood such a Continuance of Time, as was to last as long as the Covenant of Circumcision, upon the Institution whereof the Land of *Canaan* was promised, to *Abraham* and his seed after him, for an everlasting possession, *Genes. xvii. 8.* The Covenant of Circumcision being so long since at an end, God has fulfill'd his Promise to *Abraham* and his Posterity, tho' they have been for so many Ages out of Possession of the promis'd Land; because their Possession of that Land was to be but of equal Duration with that Covenant. So that God has at once both acquitted himself of his Promise, and discover'd that that Covenant is no longer of any Obligation.

But *Jeremiah* speaking of a New Covenant prophesy'd, that the seed of *Israel* should never cease from being a Nation, and that God would never cast off all the seed of *Israel*, which is set forth in such ample manner, and

and with such particular Emphasis, that we must conclude it to extend to all Ages of the World. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the Ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar: the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a Nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if Heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath; I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord, Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 37. This Prophecy, we know has been fulfill'd hitherto, partly by the Conversion of many of the Seed of Israel, both at the first Propagation of the Gospel, and in latter Ages; and partly by their continuing a distinct People from all the Nations, wherever they live dispers'd; which is a thing never known, of any other captive and dispers'd People. Jeremiah, prophesying of the times under the Messiah, has these words: In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall that be done any more, Jer. iii. 16. This can imply no less, than an abolition of the Mosaick Covenant. It is the receiv'd and ancient Doctrine of the ^a Rabbins, that God by the Messiah would give them a New Law, and make a New Covenant with them, and that under him God would allow them to eat Swine's Flesh; and that all their Feasts were to cease, but the Feast of Purim, and the Day of Atonement. But Abravanel pretends, that this Cessation is not a Subversion of the Feasts themselves, but a Cessation of the Memory of them, because all those Feasts were in Remembrance of their coming out of Ægypt. The meaning therefore, says he, is this, that the Children of Israel at the time of

^a Abravanel. de cap. Fidei, c. xiii. cum Not. Vorstii.

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their Deliverance, shall not apply their Minds to the Remembrance of the Wonders and Miracles, which God wrought for them, when he brought them out of *Ægypt*, because when they shall see the exceeding great Miracles, which God will do before them in the days of the Messiah, they shall forget the former, as the Scripture also affirms, *they shall not say the Lord liveth, who brought you out of Ægypt, &c.* But the true Reason, why, according to this Tradition of the Jews, the Feast of *Purim* and the Day of Atonement only were not to cease under the Messiah, seems to be, because by assigning these Two as the only Times which were to be observ'd, is signify'd, that Days of Repentance and Thanksgiving only would then be of Religious Observation: for to this purpose, say the ^b Rabbins, that all Offerings shall cease in the World to come (so they term the Kingdom of the Messiah) but Confession and Thanksgiving shall not cease. And what *Abravanel* argues, that the Feasts themselves were not to cease, but only the Remembrance of those things, whereof they were appointed to be Memorials, is a palpable Evasion. For how should the Remembrance cease of a thing, of which constant Memorials were continued, which were instituted for this very end, to be a *statute for ever throughout their generations in all their dwellings*, Lev. xxiii. 14. Which Words are repeated and apply'd to all their Annual Solemn Festivals, and of the Passover in particular it was commanded to be observ'd, that *thou mayst remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Ægypt, all the days of thy life*, Deut. xvi. 3. And there is no ground for that Answer, that by *all the days of thy life* is meant no longer than till the time of the Messiah, in reference to the Remembrance of the Deliverance from their Bondage in *Ægypt*; if the Observation of the Passover instituted in perpetual Memory

^b Ibid.

of it, were afterwards to be retained. The Law of *Moses* was to last to the end of the *World*, or *State* of the *Jewish* Dispensation and Government; for in the Prophetick Style the Coming of the *Messiah* was a New Creation, *Isai.* lxxv. 17. lxxvi. 22. and his Kingdom was wont by ^c the Jews to be called *the World to come*.

The Ceremonial Law therefore by its Original Design and Institution being to continue in force but till the Coming of Christ, he gave the Accomplishment to it, and put a final Period to its Obligation, instituting his Gospel in its stead, which had been prefigur'd by the Law, and foretold both by *Moses* and the Prophets, and is to continue to the end of the World.



C H A P. XVII.

Of Sinful Examples Recorded in the Scriptures.

AS some have endeavour'd to excuse their own Sins, by alledging the Sinful Examples which we find mention'd in the Scriptures; so others, who are no less fond of imitating them, yet have from hence taken a pretence for Objections and Cavils. I shall therefore shew, that the bad Examples in some Actions of Men whom we find in all other respects commended in the Scriptures, are far from being proposed for our Imitation; but there is great reason why the Faults and Miscarriages of the best Men should be deliver'd down to us in the Scriptures for our Caution and Prevention, as well as upon other accounts.

I. Several Passages of the Scriptures contain only Matter of Fact, and that very briefly express'd ; and a bare Narrative of any Action, implies neither the Approbation nor the Censure of it, but only declares that such a thing was done, and in such a manner : but the Nature of the Fact it self, with the Circumstances of it, or some Command or Permission, or Prohibition in Scripture, must discover the Goodness or Lawfulness, or the Wickedness of the Action. No Historian is supposed to approve of all which he relates ; but he must report bad as well as good deeds, who will do the part of a faithful Historian. And such is the impartiality, and admirable simplicity of the sacred Historians, that in relating the worst of Crimes, they often make no Reflection ; never fall into such Invectives, as are usual in others ; but leave the Reader to his own Remarks upon plain Matters of Fact. Thus the Evangelists, having given an account of the Cause and Circumstances of *St. John Baptist's Death*, subjoin only, that *his Disciples came and took up the Body and buried it*, Matt. xiv. 12. Mar. vi. 29.

II. The Rules of Good and Evil are plainly delivered in the Scriptures, by which we are to judge of Actions ; and we are to conform our Actions not to the Example of Men, but to the Law of God. We are forewarn'd to follow no Man's Example, when it is contrary to the Divine Law ; and therefore it could not be necessary in the relating of every evil Action to set a Mark of Infamy upon it, and a Caution against the Imitation of it.

III. The Relation of the bad Actions of Good Men may be of great use and benefit, tho' we are not to follow, but avoid them ; Because,

1. This shews the Sincerity of the Pen-Men of the Scriptures, that they spare no Person whatsoever, but relate the plain Matter of Fact, even tho' themselves be concern'd, when it is never so much to their disgrace ; as in the Denial of *St. Peter*, and other Instances.

2. By

2. By this, we learn the frailty of humane Nature, and the necessary dependence that the best Men must have upon God for his Grace in the performing any good Action; *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift, is from above, James i. 17.*

3. We learn from hence, that God can bring Good out of Evil, and doth often over-rule even the worst Actions to the accomplishment of the best Ends, and *putteth no trust in his Saints, Job xv. 15.*

There is a remarkable Instance to this purpose in the case of *Jacob* and *Esau*, when *Jacob* came by fraud and subtilty, and depriv'd his Brother of the Blessing. ^a It was in ancient Times customary to offer that of which they were to eat, in sacrifice, especially on so solemn an Occasion, as a Father's giving his final Blessing; and as in this case, foretelling the Fate of his Posterity: And therefore, when *Jacob* had by Subtilty got the Blessing of his Father, *Isaac* could not recal it to confer it upon *Esau*, because what was done in so solemn a manner, had a religious Obligation amounting to that of an Oath; and Oaths, tho' obtain'd by Fraud, were obligatory, as we learn from the case of the *Gibeonites*: He had *blessed Jacob before the Lord*; and the Prediction that *the Elder should serve the Younger*, (Gen. xxv. 23.) with *Esau's* despising and selling his Birth-right, might now probably come into *Isaac's* Mind; whereupon, tho' he did not approve of the Frand by which the Blessing was obtain'd, yet he knew it to be irrevocable, and that the Divine Purpose and Prediction would be accomplish'd thereby; and what he had by a Prophetick Spirit conferr'd, it was not in his Power to recal. The Relation therefore of this matter doth not justify *Jacob's* Behaviour in it, but manifests the overruling Providence of God, to make any means whatsoever instrumental to his gracious Ends, which can

^a Casaub. in Athenæ. lib. i. c. 11.

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never be disappointed by any Actions of Men: for if they depended upon humane Actions, these would often fail them; the best Men being subject to so much frailty and sin.

4. Tho' God of his Mercy doth accept of the imperfect Services of the Righteous, forgiving upon their habitual Repentance the Sins and Frailties which are mix'd with the best Actions; and pardoning the worst Actions likewise after a particular Repentance and Amendment of Life: yet these stand upon record for the glory of God's Grace in their Repentance and Forgiveness, and for a memorial and warning to future Ages; that Men may neither presume upon their own Righteousness, nor despair of God's Mercy. But because they are pardon'd, they are not always censur'd. God expresses his Promise of Pardon to the Wicked, upon their Repentance, by saying, that none of their Sins should be *mentioned* unto them, *Ezek. xxxiii. 16.* And I think the ill Actions of good Men are seldom or never mention'd with a mark of God's displeasure, unless the Series of the History require it; and then the Reproof is mention'd, which pass'd at the time of the commission of them; as in the case of *David*, of *Hezekiah*, and *St. Peter*. But where no such Censure was pass'd at the time of the Action, the Action it self is barely related, and nothing farther said of it; because the Crime being forgiven, God forbears to shew any farther displeasure against it; such is his Mercy to Repenting Sinners. And there could be no necessity, as I have observ'd, for any Censure upon the account of others, who may know by the plain Rule of God's Word what Actions are sinful, tho' they are not always styl'd so in relating the commission of them.

C H A P. XVIII.

Of Abraham's offering up his Son Isaac; of Jephtha's Vow; and of the Divine Vengeance executed by the People of Israel upon Heathen Nations.

HAVING^a alledged the humane Sacrifices, enjoined by the Heathen Religions, as a principal Argument of their being false; besides what has been there said, I shall in this place, more at large, remove whatever Objection of the like nature may be made against the true Religion; by shewing, that neither the Example of *Abraham*, nor that of *Jephtha*, authorises or countenances humane Sacrifices. And then I shall consider the Reasons for the Divine Vengeance executed upon Heathen Nations at God's Command.

As to the Case of *Abraham*, it is evident, that God sufficiently declared, how much he disapproved of such Sacrifices, when, as soon as *Abraham* had given that signal Testimony of his Faith, in so hard a tryal of it, an Angel from Heaven called to him, to stop his hand; and a Miracle was wrought, to substitute another Sacrifice in the stead of his Son.

And, whereas the Heathens believed their Gods to take delight in humane Sacrifices, and for that reason to require innocent Blood to be shed in their Worship, as the most acceptable part of it; and upon this Principle, and Persuasion, gave their Children to be sacrificed, in order to appease the Wrath, and satiate the Cruelty of their Gods: *Abraham* knew, that he served the God of Mercy and Loving-kindness, and that he was, at this very time, in his highest Favour and Love. He too well understood the Divine

^a Book I. p. 357.

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Attributes, to believe that God could delight in humane Blood, that such a Sacrifice could be acceptable to him, or that he could take any pleasure in making a Father the Executioner of his only Son. *Abraham* had a late experience of the Goodness of God, when he interceded for *Sodom*, and was permitted to argue from the Divine Justice in that case. But *Abraham* had likewise a full knowledge of the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, he saw the Day of Christ, and was glad, *John* viii. 56. *St. Paul* assures us, that the Gospel was preached unto *Abraham*, *Gal.* iii. 8. inasmuch as the Promise was made to him, that in him should all Nations be blessed. He knew, that the Messiah was to be born, and suffer; he knew, that all Sacrifices were Types of the Sacrifice of Christ; he knew, that the Birth of his Son *Isaac* was a Type of Christ's Birth, and now supposed, that God called him to be made a Type of his Death, and firmly believed, that he should receive him again from the Dead, as a Type of his Resurrection. By Faith, *Abraham*, when he was tried, offered up *Isaac*; and he that had received the Promises, offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, that in *Isaac* shall thy Seed be called: accounting, that God was able to raise him up even from the Dead, from whence also he received him in a Figure, *Heb.* xi. 17. * *Theophylact* supposes the day of Christ, which *Abraham* saw and was glad, to have been the day of his Crucifixion; because this was prefigured in *Abraham's* offering his Son; and he rejoiced for the Salvation of Mankind, which was to be purchas'd thereby.

Abraham acted in this case, not out of a Principle of Dread and Horror, but of Love; not with any hope or purpose of appeasing the Wrath of God, but with a full assurance of his Favour, and dependence upon his Mercy and Goodness. He knew, God was

* In *Joh.* viii. 56.

able to restore his Son alive to him, after Death; he had it revealed to him, that God would raise Christ from the Dead; and concluded, that this his Son was to typify and prefigure the Son of God, both in his Death, and in his Resurrection. For in order to accomplish the many Promises and great Blessings entail'd upon *Isaac*, he assured himself, that God would most certainly bring him to Life again. And in this Faith and Confidence, he made no scruple or difficulty to take away that Life at God's command, which God had at first by Promise and Miracle bestowed, and he trusted would as certainly restore, after he had been slain, at the express Command, and by the gracious Design of the faithful Creator, and the sole Author of Life and Death.

II. *Jephtha's* was a rash Vow, and he performed it upon his Daughter; but after what manner, is not certainly known: only this is concluded by the *Jews* as well as *Christians*, than if he did sacrifice her, he sinned in doing it.

If *Jephtha* did perform his Vow by sacrificing his Daughter, he acted ^b contrary to the Law of *Moses*, which allowed of no such Sacrifice; and did it after the Example of the *Heathen*, among whom he lived. For the Children of *Israel* were then polluted with Idolatry in serving strange Gods; and, among others, they worshipped the Gods of the Children of *Ammon*, (*Judg.* x. 6.) And *Molech* was one of the Abominations of the *Ammonites*, (*1 Kings* xi. 7.) to whom Children were offered: which Worship was expressly forbidden by the Law, (*Levit.* xviii. 21. xx. 2.) yet, after *Jephtha's* time, the Children of *Israel* were guilty of this abominable Wickedness, (*2 Kings* xxiii. 10. *Pf.* cvi. 37, 38. *Jer.* vii. 31. xxxii. 35.) And *Jephtha* was now going to fight against the *Ammonites*; and

^b Θύσας τὴν παῖδα ἀλοκαύτωσεν, ὅτε νόμιμον, ὅτε τὰς θιῶν κεχαιρομένων θυσίαν ἐπιτελῶν. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. v. c. 9.

thro' gross ignorance of the Law, and a superstitious emulation of the Enemy, he might hope to prosper in his Enterprize, by vowing as valuable a Sacrifice to the Lord, as the *Ammonites* were wont, upon a Victory obtain'd, to offer to their false God. If this be the case, we must conclude with the ^c *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and those *Rabbins*, who are of opinion, that *Jephtha* did sacrifice his Daughter; that the Anniversary Lamentation was appointed to deplore that great Sin, and to prevent such Crimes for the future.

But it has by others been supposed, that she was not put to Death, but was obliged to live in a state of Virginity and Solitude. And *Jephtha* vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt, without fail, deliver the Children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering, Judges xi. 30, 31. Here it is to be observed, that the word translated *Door*, signifies also a *Gate*; and that *House* is not to be taken strictly, but in a sense including the *Precincts*, or *Places* adjoining; as the *Temple*, and the *Courts* belonging to it, are included in the denomination of the *House* of God; and those, who sold and bought in the *Court of the Gentiles*, are said to have done it in the *Temple*, and to have made the *House of Prayer a Den of Thieves*, Matth. xxi. 13. Of the *Sheep* or *Ox* going astray, it is said: If thy Brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring him unto thine own house, Deut. xxvi. 2. In the *Hebrew* it is * into the midst of thine house. Therefore, by whatsoever cometh

^c Ut non ascendere faceret vir filium suum, vel filiam suam in holocaustum sicut fecit Jephthah Gilghadeus, & non consuluit Pinchas sacerdotem: & si consulisset Pinchas sacerdotem, redemisset eam pecuniis. Chal. Paraph. Jud. xi. 39.

* אל חך ביתך Sept. ἐνδὲν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν σου. Vulg. in domum tuam.

forth out of the doors of my House to meet me, we are to understand, whatsoever coming out of *Jephtha's* Gate, from any place adjoining to his House, ^d should happen to meet him in his return: which, if it had been a Beast, unless it had been a clean Beast, could not have been sacrificed.

He did with her according to his Vow, which he had vowed: but no Vow was to be performed against the Law; and it was contrary to the Law to offer up any thing in sacrifice, but what the Law allowed, and had prescribed. His Vow was, that whatever came forth from his House, and met him in his return from his Victory over the *Ammonites*, should surely be the Lord's, or he would offer it up for a burnt-offering, (ver. 31.) So our Translators render it in the Margin; and it is well known, that *Vau*, which they translate *and* in the Text, often signifies *or*. Whatever met him, tho' it proved to be such as was not to be sacrificed, should surely be the Lord's, according to the estimation or price of Redemption, appointed, (*Lev. xxvii. 3.*) or, if it were a Beast, and fit to be sacrificed, it was not to be altered or changed, as the Law had ordained, (ver. 9, 10.) We read indeed, (ver. 29.) *None devoted, which shall be devoted of Men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death.* But to be devoted there, is to be accursed, and appointed to be slain, in a hostile manner, not with any Rites of Sacrifice, or Ceremonies of Religion, (*Jos. vi. 17.* Whereas *Jephtha* vowed a Burnt-offering, as a Thanksgiving, if he had the desired success. The *Canaanites* and the *Amalekites* were devoted to destruction, but the Vow of *Jephtha* was of another nature. And whereas we read, that the Daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the Daughter of *Jephtha*, the *Gileadite*, four days in a Year, (*Judg. xi. 40.*) It is translated in the Margin, that they went to talk or converse with her four days

^d Occurrerit revertenti. vers. vulg.

in a Year; and the *Hebrew* word there used, is rendered to *rehearse* or *speak*, (Judg. v. 11.) From whence it has been supposed, that she was not put to Death, but was obliged to live in a state of Virginity and Solitude. If there be no Example among the *Jews*, of a Daughter thus devoted to a state of perpetual Virginity; it is also without Example among them, that any Father should make such a Vow as *Jephtha's* Vow; it was rash and unwarrantable, as well in the performance, as in the making; and he might follow the Heathen Customs in both. From all which we may conclude, that the Daughter of *Jephtha* ought not to have been sacrificed, and most probably that she was not. At least, no ^e Commentator has ever determined it to be consonant to the Law, that he should offer such a Sacrifice, but all agree that it was directly contrary to it. So far was this Action of *Jephtha*, or that of *Abraham*, from the case and nature of humane Sacrifices among the *Heathens*.

III. Mercy and Charity were the Duties of the Old Testament, as they are of the New. But God was then pleased to command and enable his chosen People to execute his Vengeance upon such as had filled up the measure of their Iniquities, to strike an awe and terror into sinful Nations: For he is the Author and Giver of Life, and the Governor and Judge of the World, of infinite Power and Authority to denounce Death upon heinous Offenders: and he may take away the Lives of Men, by what means and in what manner he pleases; and might, with the greatest Justice, make the *Israelites* the Executioners of his Wrath, especially when this was the most proper method to raise in them an abhorrence of that Idolatry, for which they were commanded to destroy others; and when, among those barbarous People, the Power of God could in no other way be so much magnified. Famine,

and Pestilence, and sudden Death, might have been imputed to natural Causes, or have been thought Judgments inflicted by their own Gods. But when Warlike and Victorious Nations were destroyed by a People, whom they had despised, and who being encompassed by Enemies on every side, vanquished them in the Name of the *Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel*, whom they defied: when this People were always Victorious for the punishment of the Sins of others, but when they suffered for their own Sins; this struck a mighty Dread into all the neighbouring Nations, with a reverence of the true God, and a hatred of their Idols, in which they had put their trust, but by experience found, that they could not save in the Day of Battel. *Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the Hills, but he is not God of the Vallies: therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord,* (1 Kings xx. 28.) And when Rabshakeh, in the Name of the King of Assyria, had uttered this Blasphemy against the Almighty, *Who are they among all the Gods of the Countries, that have delivered their Country out of mine hand? that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?* (2 Kings xviii. 35.) Then God was pleased to declare, that he would defend the City for *his own sake*, and for the honour of his Name, after so high provocation; and he slew, by his Angel, an hundred fourscore and five thousand of the *Assyrians* in one Night. As this was then done by the Ministry of an Angel; so God was commonly pleased to employ the *Armies of Israel* for the punishment of wicked Kingdoms. And with what Justice and happy Effect the Divine Judgments were thus executed, has been ^f elsewhere shewn.

Those mighty Conquerors and Deliverers, under the Law, were Types of Christ; and their Example

^f Book I. p. 69, &c.

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is applicable to us only in the Typical and Christian sense: that is, we must shew as much Resolution against our spiritual Enemies, as they were empowered to use against those of their temporal Welfare: we must be as diligent in advancing the Kingdom of Christ, and adorning his Gospel, by Works of Righteousness, by Sufferings, and Persecutions for Righteousness sake, as they were to secure and advance the temporal Glory and Greatness of the *Jewish State*. The *Christian Victories* are those of Faith; and the *Weapons of our Warfare* are not carnal but spiritual. The *Captain of our Salvation* was made perfect through Sufferings, (Heb. ii. 10.) and we, as his Followers in the same Warfare, have the same Enemies, and must subdue them by the same means. This is the Use, which St. Paul teaches us to make of the Examples of Gideon, and Barak, and Sampson, and Jephtha, and of all such as *through Faith subdued Nations, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to Flight the Armies of the Aliens*; that from these, as well as from suffering Examples, we should learn to *run with patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God*, (Heb. xi. 32, 33, 34. xii. 1, 2.) The Divine Dispensations are, with infinite Wisdom, variously adapted to the state and condition of Mankind in the several Nations and Ages of the World; but the Justice and Goodness of God are ever the same.

C H A P. XIX.

*Of the Imprecations in the Psalms, and other
Books of the Old Testament.*

ONE of the greatest Excellencies of the Christian Religion, is the Universal Charity which it enjoins; and we shall find that Charity was likewise the Doctrine of the Old Testament, and that there is nothing in the Book of *Psalms*, or any other part of the Old Testament, contrary to this Doctrine; which will appear, if we consider the peculiar Reasons for those Expressions, which may seem to imply any thing contrary to it.

I. Many of those Expressions are used in reference to the Nations, upon whom after signal Acts of Mercy and Forbearance on his part, and repeated Provocations on theirs, God had commanded the *Israelites* to execute his Judgments; and the Sins of the People of *Israel* were the Cause that this was not accomplish'd: and therefore it was lawful for them to pray that they might have grace to repent, and that their Sins might be no hindrance to them in the fulfilling his Will; but that God would enable them *to execute vengeance upon the Heathen*, Psal. cxlix. 7. And it was lawful likewise to pray against all the other Enemies of God, that he would abate their Pride, and make them *to know themselves to be but Men*, Psal. ix. 20. lxxiv. 22, 23. cxxxix. 21, 22

II. *David* being a King, had the Sword of Justice committed to him, he was *the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that did evil*; and therefore when his rebellious Subjects were too strong for him, as in the Rebellion of *Absalom*, he might make his Appeal to God, and beseech him to take the matter into his own hand. If he might punish his
Sub-

Subjects, he might pray to God that he would enable him to do it. And in Foreign Wars, if he might kill his Enemies, he might pray for Victory and Success over them.

III. It is lawful to pray that publick and notorious Malefactors may be punish'd, for it is lawful to discover them, and bring them to Punishment; and it must needs be lawful to pray that that may be done, which it is lawful for us to do. It is lawful to seek Redress of private Injuries, and therefore it is lawful to pray, that they may be redress'd; for we may pray for Success upon any honest Undertaking. If this be done out of a Love to Justice, and a necessary care of our own Preservation; not out of Malice, and a Thirst after Revenge, but with the most favourable Construction that the worst Actions are capable of, and with hearty Prayers to God for his Blessing upon the Offender; in giving him the Grace of Repentance, and granting him whatsoever Happiness in this World may be consistent with the Honour of God, and Justice towards other Men, and the Salvation of his own Soul.

IV. God was the peculiar Law-giver, and Political Governor of the *Jews*; and Temporal Rewards and Punishments were the Sanction of the Laws which he had given them. For the *Mosaical Law* is called *the Ministration of Death*, and *the Ministration of Condemnation*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. because the Promises of the Law, as *such*, belong'd only to this Life, and a Curse was denounc'd against every one, *that continued not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10, 11. God had expressly threatned to inflict Punishment in this Life, for the Transgression of those Laws; and therefore to pray to God that his Judgments might overtake Evil-doers, was no more than it is in other Governments, to prosecute Offenders before the Magistrate; they appeal'd to God to put his Laws in force against them, and not to suffer

fer the wicked to go unpunish'd in contempt of those Laws, which he had appointed, and under that Dispensation which was establish'd upon Temporal Rewards and Punishments. They were not allow'd to indulge their Anger and Desire of Revenge; yet they might pray that God would avenge himself of his Enemies, and rescue his Laws from that Contempt which they must lie under from wicked Men, if they did not feel those Punishments which the Laws of God threatned them withal.

But under the Gospel the Case is different; for now we are not to expect that Temporal Rewards and Punishments should constantly follow upon the Performance or Transgression of our Duty; but both of them may be commonly reserv'd to a future State. A Christian may not pray for Judgments upon his Enemies, because God has not so peremptorily declar'd by the Gospel, that he will inflict his Punishments in this Life, as he had done by the Law; and we have our Saviour's Command and Example to pray for their Repentance, that they be not punish'd in the next. But a Christian may right himself in due course of Law; and, in order to that, may petition the Judge, without any breach of Charity; and this was all that the *Jews* did, when they pray'd God to execute his own Laws, by inflicting such Punishments as he had threatned to inflict upon the Transgressors of them in this Life: they invoked and appeal'd to God as their Political Judge and Sovereign, and pray'd Judgment against Offenders.

V. Those which seem Imprecations, are oftentimes Predictions or Denunciations of Judgments to come upon Sinners; as we may learn from *Acts* i. 20. And it can be no Uncharitableness to foretel or denounce God's Judgments against Sinners, but rather an effect of Charity towards them for their Repentance and Amendment.

Most of those places of Scripture may as properly be render'd by way of Prediction in the Future Tense; and when they cannot, they may be look'd upon as Denunciations of God's Wrath. For Prophets were sometimes employ'd to execute the Divine Judgments, as we see in *Elijah*, 2 *Kings* i. 9, 10. and as they sometimes executed God's Judgments, so they at other times denounced them; and this had nothing of Uncharitableness in it, but is fully agreeable with the Gospel it self. For thus we read that *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were punished with present Death by St. *Peter*, *Acts* v. But if St. *Peter* had denounced Death, without inflicting it immediately upon them, this had been less. And St. *Paul* prays that the Lord would reward *Alexander the Copper-Smith* according to his works, who had done him much evil, 2 *Tim.* iv. 14. which was no uncharitable Imprecation, but a leaving him to God's Judgment, and a Denunciation of Punishment to befall him without Repentance; it was an Authoritative Act, and in consequence of that Excommunication which the Apostle had inflicted upon him, 1 *Tim.* i. 20. And when God had inspir'd and empower'd Men to denounce Judgments, this was no more against Charity, than the inflicting of them would have been, or than Excommunication it self is. If Magistrates are empower'd in the King's Name to give Sentence, and to inflict Punishments, certainly Men may be so empower'd and authoriz'd by God himself, and may act or speak accordingly, without breach of Charity.

VI. The Expressions *Psal.* lxxix. and cix. are to be understood concerning *Judas*, as we find them apply'd *Acts* i. and all other Expressions of the same Nature may be understood either of him, or of some others like him, whom the *Psalmist* by Inspiration might know to be hardned in Sin, past Repentance, and therefore might pray that God would rather cut them off, than suffer them to do more mischief in this World,

World, and increase the number of their Iniquities here, and of their Miseries in the World to come.

VII. Lastly, This Supposition is tacitly imply'd in Imprecations, *if they will persist in their Sins, if they will not repent*; and the Pen-men of the Holy Scriptures might in some Cases know by Revelation, that Judgments were the only means to reclaim those Men against whom they pray'd, and then it was the greatest Charity to pray that God would be pleas'd to make use of that Remedy, which alone was left for their Amendment; as *Psal. lxxxiii. 15, 16. So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame: that they may seek thy Name, O Lord.*

There is nothing therefore inconsistent with the Doctrine of Charity, and the Love of our Neighbour in those places of Scripture, which have been liable to the Mistakes of unwary Men. For either they are Prayers to God to enable the *Israelites* to do what he had appointed, as in the Destruction of the *Canaanites*, whom God was pleas'd for wise and great Reasons to punish by the Sword of the Children of *Israel*, rather than by Pestilence, or any other Judgment. Or they are Prayers to God to assist them in the doing what both Justice and Charity will allow to be done, either by Persons in Authority, as *King David*, or even by private Men; as in the prosecution of Offenders, and bringing them to condign punishment; and this may be without any degree of Malice, or the least breach of Charity; since Punishment it self may be not only an Act of Justice, but of Charity likewise towards divers Men. Or these Expressions may be Appeals to God, as the Political Governor and Legislator of the *Jews*: Or they are Predictions or Denunciations of God's Wrath against Sinners. And they may be directed against impenitent obstinate Men, hardned in their Wickedness. Or, lastly, they may be only Prayers to God, that he would inflict such

Punishments upon Men, as may bring them to Repentance.

And tho' the *Jews*, in latter Ages, perverted some passages of their Law, to serve their own Pride and Revenge; yet, as it is evident by many instances, never any Law but that of Christ, oblig'd Men to more Humanity towards Strangers, or more Charity towards Enemies. They were certainly to *bear false witness* against no Man, and to covet no Man's House or Wife; and therefore the word *Neighbour* is not to be limited, to signify only an *Israelite* or a *Profelyte*, but is to be understood of any Man whatsoever, *Exod. xx. 16, 17. Thou shalt love him* (the Stranger) *as thy self*, *Lev. xix. 34.* The *Ægyptians* are styled the Neighbours of the *Israelites*, *Exod. xi. 2.* And *Psal. xv. 2, 3.* where Acts of common Justice towards Neighbours are spoken of, by *Neighbour* must necessarily be understood any Person, for to all Men Justice is due. Not only Justice, but Charity was enjoin'd towards Enemies. *If thine Enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee, Prov. xxv. 21, 22.* which words so fully express our Duty of Christian Charity, that *St. Paul* could find none fitter to describe it by, *Rom. xii. 20.* And, *Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.* *If thou meet thine enemy's Ox, or his Ass, going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the Ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burthen, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.* And in divers other places of the Old Testament, Charity towards Enemies is highly recommended, and earnestly inculcated, *Job xxxi. 29. Prov. xx. 22. xxiv. 29. Malach. ii. 10. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, we read, *Lev. xix. 18.* but *thou shalt hate thine Enemy*, is no where to be found in the Old Testament; and therefore, *Matth. v. 43.* it is to be taken as a false gloss of the Interpreters of the

the Law, which our Saviour rejects ; unless it be to be meant, as *Grotius* understands it, of that enmity which the *Jews* were to shew in all Acts of Hostility towards the seven Nations of *Canaan*, and the *Amalekites*, *Exod.* xvii. 16. xxxiv. 11. *Deut.* vii. 1. xxv. 19. Yet these very Nations were not utterly excluded from becoming Profelytes : And to me it seems very remarkable, that tho' the Children of *Israel* had receiv'd such hard and cruel usage in *Ægypt*, which is so often mention'd in the Law of *Moses*, they were, nevertheless, by the same Law commanded not to abhor an *Ægyptian*, but to admit the Children of *Ægyptian* Parents into the Congregation of the Lord in the third Generation. *Thou shalt not abhor an Ægyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his Land, Deut.* xxiii. 7. Thou shalt not abhor him, that is, thou shalt not revenge upon him the Injuries done thee, but shalt shew him Kindness ; the least effect whereof, was to relieve him in time of distress ; which^a Charity, the *Jews* ever held themselves oblig'd to extend to the *Gentiles* ; and there is reason to suspect, that they have been wrong'd in the reports of their Uncharitableness to all of other Nations ; but any thing is easily believ'd of a hated and despis'd People. And I am not to vindicate their Practice, but their Law. ^b *Philo Judæus* has an excellent Treatise, in which he discourseth at large upon this Subject, and shews to how great Humanity and Charity the *Jews* were oblig'd by the Law of *Moses*. ^c *Josephus* maintains, that they were oblig'd to supply the *Heathen* with all things necessary for their support, with Fire, and Water, and Food ; to shew them the way, and not to let their Dead lie unburied : Which is a direct, and doubtless a designed confutation of those Calumnies of Inhumanity, which, in his time, were

^a Lightf. Hebr. & Talmud. *Exercit.* on *Matth.* vi. 2.

^b *Philo Jud.* *ᾠς φιλανθρωπισμῶς.*

^c *Contr. Ap.* l. 2.

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charged upon the *Jews*, taken perhaps from the Practice of the Pharisees and Zealots. For the latter *Jews* differed in these Points; ^d *Leo* of *Modena* affirms, that the *Rabbins* expressly teach, that Charity ought indifferently to be extended to all Mankind, to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*. And nothing can be more full and express than the *Jewish* ^e Catechism is, that all Justice and Civility ought to be used towards *Heathens*. But ^f *Maimonides* lays this down for a rule, that they ought not to relieve the *Gentiles* in want, upon any account of obligation by the Law, but only for the sake of Peace with those among whom they lived; and that if they see any of them in the last extremity, they may not preserve them from perishing. But no true judgment can be made of any Religion from the Practice or Principles of some of its Professors, nor of any Nation from the ill Temper or false Notions of any Sects or Factions.

^d *Leo* Moden. Part. 1. c. 14. §. 9.

^e *Erat majoribus nostris in ore semper hac aurea sententia; Quisque consuescat—Multo pacis ac concordie studio conciliare sibi fratres, propinquos, cunctos homines, etiam alienigenam, communione fori conjunctum, huic honorem habere, salutem impertire prior, tam equum & fidum esse quam consanguineis suis satum Israelitarum editis. Etenim multo gravius est scelus ethnico, quam Judeo quid per vim eripere. Nimirum ille propter injuriam sibi factam, Dei numen profanum, despicatum, habet, &c.* *Abrah. Jagel. Catech. Judæ. p. 50.*

^f *De Idololatr. c. 10. §. 1. c. 26. §. 6.*

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

Of the Texts of the Old Testament cited in the New.

TH O' the Apostles having prov'd their Divine Commission by so many and so undeniable Miracles, had an infallible Authority to interpret and apply the Texts of the Old Testament in confirmation of the Gospel ; yet it is not to be doubted, but that the Citations, which seem to have most difficulty in them, are such as that the *Jews* of that time, against whom they were urged, could not but acknowledge that the Apostles gave the true Exposition of them, tho' they deny'd that they were truly apply'd to our Saviour, and his Gospel. For unless the Apostles had either made out their Citations from the Old Testament by Maxims and Principles then known and receiv'd among the *Jews*, or had alledg'd them in such a sense, as was then generally acknowledg'd, it had been to no purpose to alledge them at all against them.

It is known likewise, and observable upon this occasion, that after the Captivity in *Babylon*, tho' the Bible was read in the Synagogues in the Original *Hebrew*, yet it was also interpreted into the vulgar Language, and the Interpreter did not always translate the Text *verbatim*, but often gave the sense of it in different words, and with some latitude, to render it the more intelligible. This way of Interpretation was at length improv'd into a *Chaldee* Paraphrase, containing with the Text a short Explication of it according to the sense of the most Learned among the *Jews*, tho' there must be supposed to have been many Notions current among them, which would not be brought within the compass of that Exposition. The

Writers therefore of the New Testament, might sometimes give such an Interpretation of the Texts of the Old Testament, as was as well, or better known among them for whom they wrote, than the *Greek* or *Hebrew* Text was; or they might take upon themselves the liberty of Interpreters, the better to explain the Texts alledged, and enforce their Arguments.

Thus, for instance, St. *Stephen*, Acts vii. would never have produc'd any thing out of the Old Testament before the *Sanhedrin*; nor would St. *Luke* have recorded it soon after, if it had been capable of any disproof or confutation, whatever difficulties at this distance of time there may appear to us to be in it. And so in all other cases, we may depend upon it, that the Apostles and other Disciples, who had such demonstrative Evidence for the conviction of Unbelievers, by a constant power of Miracles, would never make use of any Arguments to the *Jews* from the Old Testament, but such as they well knew, their Adversaries could never be able to disprove or deny. For there were then certain methods of Interpretation, as we learn from ^a *Josephus*, which are now lost, and they disputed from acknowledg'd Maxims and Rules: the only difference and matter of dispute, was in the application of them to their particular case; however our ignorance of things, then generally known, may now make it difficult to reconcile some Texts of the New Testament with those of the Old, from whence they were cited. The late ^b publisher of the *Misna* observes this to have been the genuine and proper method of the *Jews* in their Citations, not to produce the Texts, as they lie in the Bible, but sometimes to use different Expressions, and sometimes to

^a Joseph. Bell. Judaic. lib. iii. c. 14.

^b Guil. Surenhusius. Præf. in Misn. Part. 1. & Libro nuper edito de locis ex V. in N. T. ablegatis.

change the order of the words. And ^c that this was ever the constant custom of Prophets, (and such the Apostles were) to deliver the sense, and not the very words of Scripture, is a received Doctrine among the *Rabbins*; by which, one of them vindicates *Moses*, in the variation which he makes in repeating the Ten Commandments, (*Deut. v. 12.*) from the words spoken by God himself, (*Exod. xx. 8.*)

^d F. Simon, in his Critical History, has a remarkable Passage upon this Subject: "The Book, says he, " where the most of that sort of Citations are found, " is the Epistle of St. Paul to the *Hebrews*, where we " find nothing else but Passages of the Old Testament " explain'd in a manner that is altogether Allegorical, " and foreign to the Letter; which has also given an " occasion to some Writers to suspect, that St. Paul " was not the Author. But it seems on the contrary, " that if we reflect upon the *Pharisees* Method in " their expounding Scripture, it cannot be attributed " to any other than to that holy Apostle, who having " studied in *Jerusalem* under the Doctor *Gamaliel*, did " penetrate into all the most refined Points of their secret and mystical Interpretations of the Bible. And " indeed, after I had recommended the reading of " this Epistle to a Jew, who was well read in his own " ancient Authors, he having perused it, freely declared, that it must needs have been written by " some great ^e *Mekubal* of his own Nation. And he " was so far from telling me that St. Paul had wrested " the true sense of Scripture with his Allegories at " pleasure, that he extolled his profound skill in the " sublime sense of the Bible, and always return'd to

Moses pro mementote dixit servate, ad solum sensum attendens, usitato Prophetis more, qui semper mentem Scriptura, non autem verba considerant. Menass. Ben. 11. Conciliat. in Exod. Q. 36. §. 1.

^d Sim. Crit. Hist. of the N. Test. Part 1. c. xxi.

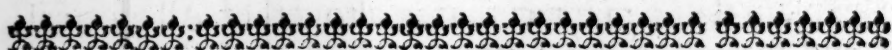
^e A Man of Tradition.

his

“ his great *Mekubal*, of whom he never spake but
“ with admiration.

Hoc in omnibus scripturis sanctis observandum est Apostolos & Apostolicos viros in ponendis Testimoniis de veteri Testamento, non verba considerare, sed sensum, nec eadem Sermonum calcare vestigia, dummodò à sententiis non recedant. Hieron. in Amos. c. v.

Ex quo perspicuum est Apostolos & Evangelistas, & ipsum Dominum salvatorem——ex Hebræo transferre quod legerint, non curantes de syllabis punctisque verborum, dummodò sententiarum veritas transferatur. Id. in Malach. c. iii.



C H A P. XXI.

Of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God.

THIS is that Article of our Faith, which was to the Jews a *Stumbling-block*, and to the Greeks *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 23. and has ever been most liable to the Objections of Infidels: and therefore I shall take the more care to give the clearest and fullest account I can of it.

I. I shall here consider the necessity of the Incarnation of the Son of God, for the satisfaction of the Justice, and the vindication of the Honour of God.

II. Tho' it should be suppos'd, that God could have pardon'd the Sins of Men upon any other terms, than the Death and Satisfaction of his own Son in our Flesh; I hope fully to prove, that this is so far from being unworthy of God, that no other way of our Reconciliation with him (as far as we are able to apprehend) could have been so becoming the Divine Wisdom and Goodness.

I. There

I. There seems to have been a necessity for the Incarnation of the Son of God, in order to the satisfaction of God's Justice, and the vindication of his Honour. For God is Infinite Justice, as well as Infinite Mercy; and Infinite Justice must punish Offenders, unless full satisfaction be made for the Offence; because Infinite Justice must demand to the utmost extent of Justice, and must require whatsoever can in Justice be demanded. Justice requires whatever can justly be demanded; but since that may justly be demanded, which it may be consistent with Justice to forgive; Mercy interceded, that whatever can be without injustice forgiven, should not be exacted. *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his Grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his Blood,—that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.* that is, that God might approve and manifest his Justice in demanding satisfaction, and his Mercy in remitting the Punishment to Sinners, by transferring it upon his own Son, who voluntarily undertook the expiation of Sin, by suffering himself in the behalf and in the stead of Sinners. But Infinite Mercy found out a means to satisfy this Infinite Justice; which Satisfaction could be made only by the Obedience and by the Death of the Son of God, who by his *Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*, vindicated the Honour of God, by performing in our Nature a perfect and absolute Obedience to all that ever God required of Mankind, and by suffering to the utmost of all that the Sins of the whole World deserv'd. It is for the Honour of God, that his Laws should be exactly observ'd, and observ'd by one who is of that very Nature, for which they were ordain'd; and that Satisfaction should be made in the same Nature for the Sins of it: Christ therefore taking our Nature upon him, paid down *the uttermost Farthing*; which,

which, in strictness of Justice, must have been demanded, but which could never have been paid by any created Being, for the Sins of the whole World: And he *fulfill'd all Righteousness* in obedience to the Divine Laws, which otherwise could never have been fully obey'd. And as far as God's Justice and Honour was concern'd to see his Laws obey'd, and to demand satisfaction for the breach of them; so far the Incarnation of the Son of God must be necessary, because these things could be perform'd by no Creature. But whether the Incarnation of Christ was absolutely in it self necessary to the Salvation of Men or no, it is most certain, that it was necessary by the Divine Decree, and according to the Terms of the Gospel. *Him God had set forth, or * fore-ordained, to be a Propitiation*, Rom. iii. 25. *He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 20. So that according to the Eternal Decree of God, Salvation could by no other means be obtained, but by the Incarnation and Satisfaction of his Son.

II. Tho' it should be supposed that God could have pardon'd the Sins of Men upon other Terms than the Death and Satisfaction of his own Son in our Flesh, which is the Doctrine of † St. *Augustine*, and the School-men; yet, as they also assert, the Incarnation and Death of his Son is so far from implying anything unworthy of God, that no other way of our Reconciliation with him (as far as we can apprehend) could so much have become the Divine Wisdom and Goodness.

First, There is nothing in this whole Dispensation unworthy of God. Here I am to consider that which

* Προέθετο δὲ εἶπεν, ἵνα δείξῃ, ὅτι πάλιν προώριστο; ἢ διὰ τὰ ἁμαρτὰ τῶ χειρὸς ἀπολύτρωσις. Theophylact. in Rom. iii. 25.

† Aug. de Trinitat. lib. xiii. c. 10. Lombard. lib. iii. Dist. 20. Aquin. Sum. Part. 3. Art. 2.

was the great Prejudice taken against the Christian Religion at its first Propagation, and is still the great Objection of the Enemies of the Gospel of Christ, and of their own Salvation. They are apt to represent it to themselves as an unnecessary thing, and unworthy of God, that he should send his only begotten Son into the World for the Redemption of Mankind; they imagine that the Infinite Wisdom of God could have found out other Methods of Salvation for us, and that this would never have been made use of, if there could have been any other.

It might be enough in Answer to such Objections, to say with the Apostle; *nay, but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Person saved say unto him that saved him, why hast thou saved me thus?* Will we not be contented to be saved, unless we can be fully certify'd in all the Reasons and Methods of our Salvation? May not God bring to pass our Redemption in such a way as he shall see fitting? or shall we question his Wisdom, if his Mercy be so much greater than we can comprehend? How infinite is his Mercy, and how monstrous our Ingratitude, if his Goodness be made an Objection against the Truth of his Word, and be alledg'd as an Argument for our Unbelief! *What if God willing to shew the Heinousness of Sin, and to make known the riches of his Mercy, chose this way for the Redemption of the World?* What if many Reasons may be given why this Method was the most proper and expedient; and what if there might be infinitely greater and better Reasons for it, than all the Wisdom of Man can conceive?

But though the Reveal'd Will and Counsel of God ought to silence all Disputes in this as well as in all other Cases; yet I think this Objection is capable of a very plain and direct Answer. For whatever Weight there may seem to be in it, it is all grounded upon a Mistake, and upon a wrong Notion of the Union between

tween the Divine and the Humane Nature of Christ. For if the Godhead be not so united to the Manhood as to suffer with it, there is no imaginable Reason why its Union with the Manhood should be supposed to be unworthy of God. I shall therefore

1. Shew the Unreasonableness of this Supposition, that the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ should cause the Godhead to suffer with the Manhood.

2. I will prove that the Humiliation of the Son of God, in assuming our Nature, may be accounted for, without supposing that the Godhead suffer'd.

3. That the Satisfaction of Christ by dying for our Sins may be explain'd without it.

1. The Unreasonableness of this Supposition, that the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ should cause the Godhead to suffer with the Manhood. This Objection supposes the Godhead to be so united to the Manhood in the Person of our Saviour, as that the Divine Nature must really and properly partake in all the Sufferings which befel his Person. It supposes, that Christ, as God, suffer'd the Miseries of Humane Life, and at last underwent Death upon the Cross; which is so far from being the Doctrine of the Gospel, that it is no better than Heresy and Blasphemy, and has always been rejected and condemn'd as such by the Catholick Church. That the Union of the Godhead with the Manhood, should render the Godhead capable of Sufferings, as the Soul by being united to the Body becomes sensible of its Pains, is indeed a thing not only unworthy of God, but impossible to conceive. The Immortal and ever-blessed God can be subject to nothing of Passion or Frailty. The Godhead is incapable of any Imperfection, and therefore incapable of receiving any Impressions of Sufferings from the Humane Nature, as the Soul doth from the Body of Man. So that tho' the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in

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Christ be fitly explain'd by that between the Soul and the Body in Man, yet the manner of acting is very different. For Finite Beings can mutually act and be acted upon by each other in their several Actions and Passions; but the Divine Nature of Christ being impassible, could suffer nothing by all that was inflicted on the Humane, but remain'd infinitely Happy and Glorious under all the Torments and Agonies endur'd by our Saviour both in his Soul and Body. The Son of God suffer'd, that is, the Person, who is the Son of God; but he suffer'd, not as Son of God, but as Man united Personally to the Godhead. The Properties, Actions, and Passions of both Natures belong to the Person consisting of both; who may be denominated from both, and receive different Denominations, some from one Nature, and some from the other. For whatever belongs to either Nature, is communicated to the Person consisting of both Natures, tho' the Properties, Actions or Passions of each Nature cannot be communicated from one of these Natures to the other. The Soul is immaterial and immortal; the Body is material and mortal; but Man consisting of Soul and Body, is immaterial and immortal in respect of his Soul, but material and mortal with respect to his Body. And Soul and Body still retaining their different Properties distinct, the Man, by Virtue of the Union of the Soul and Body, is denominated from both: Man is mortal and immortal; mortal as to his Body, but immortal as to his Soul. And Christ, who could not suffer in his Divine Nature, suffer'd in his Humane.

As God is pleas'd to aid and assist and support innocent and good Men in their Sufferings, and to direct and conduct them through the Course of their Lives: So God was not only present with the Humane Nature of Christ, but was so united to it, as to become one Person with it; which, since the Godhead could suffer nothing from it, is no more unworthy of God,

God, than if he had only guided him with his Spirit, as he did the Prophets without any personal Union. There is no Inconvenience or Absurdity in believing that God should by the most intimate and personal Union become united to a Man, who did weep, and bleed, and die. For as God by this Union did not change the Nature he had assumed, or prevent the Sufferings of it, so he did not partake in them. No Man can deny, upon Principles of Philosophy, but that it is very reasonable to believe, that God may afford a more peculiar Presence to one Man than to another, and that this Man may yet be subject to Afflictions; and therefore the Son of God might become united to the Soul and Body of Christ in as intimate a manner, as the Soul and Body are united to each other in us; and yet this Union of the Divine Nature might not preserve the Humane from the Sufferings incident to the rest of Mankind, but must leave it to submit to them, tho' they were never so grievous, when this was the very End and Design of the Union.

It was not below the Majesty of God to be Personally united to a most Innocent, and Sinless and Holy Man, tho' he was a Suffering and Afflicted Man; and it is not the Personal Union, as some are apt to conceive, which could be any Diminution to God's Glory, but their own Error and Mistake, in what they surmise would be the Consequence of such an Union.

2. The Humiliation of the Son of God in assuming our Nature, may be accounted for, without supposing that the Godhead suffer'd. It was the greatest Condescension and Humiliation in the Son of God to take upon him our Nature: For it is a gracious and merciful Condescension for him to take care of us by his Providence. *God humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and in the Earth*, Psal. cxiii. 6. But sometimes and in some places he is in a more peculiar man-

manner present upon Earth, and that is an extraordinary Condescension; though he is always the same in himself, and never the less present, or the less happy in Heaven. But it was the most wonderful Condescension in God to unite himself to our Humane Nature, and to become one Person with it, and so to die for us; tho' his Divine Nature did not, and could not suffer, but only the Humane Nature to which it is united. He was *not ashamed to call Men his Brethren*, and in all Things to be made like unto his Brethren, Heb. ii. 11, 17. but vouchsafed to assume our Nature in its lowest Condition, and to be so strictly and personally united to the most afflicted of all the Sons of Men, as to ascribe all his Sufferings to himself, for the Benefit of all Mankind.

It is the infinite Mercy of God, to vouchsafe us the Comfort of his Presence in any Way or Measure: But it is the most astonishing and adorable Act of his Goodness, that he would be pleas'd so far to condescend, as to take our very Nature upon him, that he might be born, and might die for our Sakes. And that which magnifies his Mercy and Goodness in the highest Measure, is certainly most worthy of the good and merciful God.

3. The Satisfaction of Christ by dying for our Sins, may be explain'd without supposing that the Godhead suffer'd. The Christian Faith is, *That as the Reasonable Soul and Flesh is one Man, so God and Man is one Christ*; and that this Person consisting both of God and Man united, suffer'd for our Salvation: But that all the Sufferings were inflicted on the Humane Nature, and terminated in it. God and Man became one Christ, *not by the Conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God*. The Humane Nature was assum'd into the Personality of his Godhead, *not by Confusion of Substance, but by Unity of Person*. The Divine Nature of Christ and his Humane Nature became one Person, and tho' these two Natures

remain as distinct as before the Union; yet all the Properties of a Person belong to both Natures united, and whatever was done or suffered by him, was attributed to the Person consisting of both Natures. And as in Man the Personality is derived from his Superior Nature to his Inferior, and the Body is taken into a Unity of Person with the Soul; so, much rather, when God was pleased to become united to Man; the *Personal Unity*, or that *Subsistence*, whereby they are but one Person, is with the like Subordination of the Humane to the Divine Nature, as that of the Body to the Soul in Man; that is, with all Subordination, which can be consistent with the Distinction of Natures, and the Preservation of the free Exercise of the Faculties in the inferior Nature. This Subordination of the Humane to the Divine Nature in Christ, causes the Unity of his Person consisting of both Natures. For by a *Person*, in the usual Signification of the Word, as it is apply'd to Creatures, is meant a Rational Being of a separate Existence from all other Rational Beings: And therefore the Humane Nature of Christ, by its Union with his Divine Nature, having no separate Existence, has no Personality or Subsistence of its own, but in the Personality or Subsistence of his Divine Nature.

And Christ thus consisting of both Natures, suffer'd a proper and satisfactory Punishment for the Sins of all Mankind, by enduring in their Stead, all that was required of them, according to the Sanction of the Divine Law. For by virtue of the Personal Union of his Divine with his Humane Nature, all Christ's Sufferings receiv'd an infinite Value and Merit, and became entituled and ascrib'd to God himself, because they were undergone by that Person, who is God as well as Man, though they were not undergone by him in his Divine, but only in his Humane Nature.

Thus

Thus God is said to have *purchased his Church with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. and to have *laid down his Life for us*, 1 Joh. iii. 16. *The Lord of glory was crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 8. For Actions and Passions in any Person are Personal, and are attributed to the whole Person; and sometimes those Actions and Passions, which can be perform'd in one of those Natures only, which constitute a Person, are yet attributed to the other Nature, which is incapable of them otherwise than by that Relation which results from the Union of both Natures; whereby all things that befall the Person, may be affirm'd of it as such, and therefore have respect to both the Natures, of which it consists, and may be apply'd to it, under the Denomination of either of them. *All the Souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy Souls*, Exod. i. 5. *If a Soul touch any unclean thing*, Lev. v. 2. *And the Soul that eateth of it, shall bear his iniquity*, Lev. vii. 18, 20. In these, and many other places of Scripture, Actions and Passions peculiar to the Body, are, by reason of the Union of the Soul and Body, attributed to the Soul. Nay, both in the *Hebrew* and the *Greek* Text the Soul is sometimes put for the Body, even of a dead Man, Lev. xxi. 11. xxii. 4. in which Sense ^a Bishop Pearson explains Acts ii. 27. Psal. xvi. 10. as ^b divers others had done before him.

And in other places the Body or Flesh is often taken for the whole Man, and that is attributed to it, which the Flesh is of it self incapable of. The Flesh distinctly consider'd, and apart from the Soul, can nei-

^a On the Creed, Art. v. ^b Archbishop Usher's Answer to the Jesuites Challenge, p. 305. Virgil puts Souls for dead Bodies, as Nonius Marcellus observes, cap. 6.

Ite, ait: egregias animas, quæ sanguine nobis
Hanc Patriam peperere suo, decorate supremis
Muneribus——— Æn. xi. 25.

ther sin, nor pray, nor understand, nor worship, nor partake of the Spirit, nor be justify'd; and yet all these things are ascribed to the Flesh, without any mention made of the Soul. *All Flesh had corrupted his way upon the Earth*, Gen. vi. 12. *O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come*, Psal. lxxv. 2. *And all Flesh shall know, that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob*, Isai. xlix. 26. *All Flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord*, Isai. lxvi. 23. *And all Flesh shall see the Salvation of God*, Luke iii. 6. *I will pour out of my Spirit upon all Flesh*, Acts ii. 17. Joel ii. 28. *By the works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified*, Gal. ii. 16. And we say in our own Language, *any Body thinks, or any Body understands*; tho' we all know, it is the Soul, and not the Body, which thinks, and understands. It is very usual in other Books, and very agreeable to the Style of Scripture, and to the common Speech and Sense of Men, for those Actions or Passions of a Person to be attributed to him, under the Denomination of one of the united Natures, which could be perform'd only in the other. And the Union between the Godhead and the Manhood being like that which is between the Soul and the Body, the Son of God is said to have *suffered*, and the Son of Man to have *come down from Heaven*; not that the Godhead suffered, or that the Humane Nature of Christ was in Heaven before his Incarnation, but according to the usual Style of Scripture, the Union between the Divine and Humane Natures entitles the Person consisting of them both, under the Denomination of either Nature, to that which was done in the other, tho' as the Humane Nature did not partake of the Perfections of the Divine: so neither did the Divine Nature partake of the Sufferings of the Humane. But both Natures being personally united, the Person is sometimes denoted by one, and sometimes by the other Nature.

All the Objections against the Incarnation of the Son of God proceed upon the like Mistake with theirs, who are apt to imagine that it is unworthy of God to be every where, and in all places, to behold and be present at the worst of Actions; as if the Sun's Brightness would not be the more resplendent and glorious, if it could penetrate into the obscurest Corners and Recesses of the Earth; or as if his Rays could be ~~filthy~~ defiled by the Foulness of any Object which they shine upon. And if it be no Diminution to God's Infinite Glory and Majesty to be Omnipresent, it can be none to be more nearly and even personally united to some Part of the Creation; and therefore it cannot be unworthy of God to be so united to the Humane Nature, to manifest his Love and Favour, and extend his Goodness to Mankind. As God is every where present, so he is in a more especial manner present in some places, than in others, by the Acts of his Power, or of his Grace and Favour; and he has vouchsafed a more especial Presence to some Persons than to others; and thus he was present with his Prophets, who were sent to prepare for and foretel Christ's Coming. But he was personally united to the Humane Nature of Christ. And this is the highest Honour and Advancement to our Nature, for God thus to assume it; but it can be no Diminution to the Divine Majesty, because God continues as he was from all Eternity, without any Alteration; only by his personal Presence and Union with our Humane Nature, he causes all the Performances and Sufferings of it to be meritorious, for the Salvation of Mankind.

The Son of God did not so come down from Heaven as to be no longer there, but to forsake his Father's Kingdom; He still continued in Heaven in the same Bliss and Glory, that he enjoy'd with his Father from all Eternity, tho' he so manifested himself to the World, as to come and abide in it by assuming our

Humane Nature. Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus*, John iii. 13. *No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.* He who fills Heaven and Earth with his Presence, was still in Heaven as much as ever, with respect to his Godhead, tho' he made a more peculiar residence than he had before done on Earth, by dwelling in our Nature here. The Son of God who is at all times every where present, is yet in a peculiar manner present, where-ever he is pleas'd to manifest himself by peculiar Acts of his Goodness and Power, as he was pleas'd to do in a most stupendous manner in that Flesh which he took upon him of the Blessed Virgin. And it cannot be thought inconsistent with the Majesty of God to actuate the Humane Nature, and to be joined in the most strict and vital Union with it, supposing God only to act upon it, and not to be acted upon by it, nor to suffer the Miseries and feel the Pains which the Humane Nature endures, (which would be Blasphemy to assert of the Divine Nature of Christ,) but to be in Heaven still in his full Power and Majesty.

But some Man will say, how is this Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ made, or wherein doth it consist? To whom we may reply, as our Saviour sometimes did to the *Scribes and Pharisees*, by asking another Question, and enquiring, how the Body and Soul in Man are united: or, how God is present in all places: and how *in him we live, and move, and have our being.* And if no Man can tell how these things are, tho' no Man can deny the truth and reality of them, then it is not to be expected, that we should be able to tell how the Union between the Divine and Humane Nature in Christ is made, or in what it consists. We must acknowledge it a Mystery, which it is above any Man's capacity to explain; but that there is such an Union, we learn from the Scriptures, and thither we appeal for the truth of it.

And

And the putting such Questions, argues either a great mind to cavil, or great inconsideration, and shortness of thought. For what Man is there pretending to Reason and Argument, of so little observation, as not to take notice, that of all the things which we daily see and perceive to be in the World, the nature and manner of Existence of very few, or rather of none of them, is fully understood by us? It is sufficient for us to know, that great Reasons may be given for this dispensation of the Son of God incarnate, and that no material Objection can be framed against it.

Secondly, No other way (as far as we can apprehend) could have been so proper and expedient, as the Incarnation of the Son of God, to procure the Salvation of Mankind, and therefore none could so well become the Divine Wisdom and Goodness. The proof of this must depend upon the Reasons for Christ's coming into the World, and they are all comprehended in this one thing, the abolishing or taking away of Sin. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our Sins, and in him is no Sin, 1 John iii. 5.* We are to consider then, that the manifestation of Christ in the Flesh, did more powerfully and effectually take away Sin, than any other way or means of Salvation could have done.

I. The Doctrine and Preaching of the Son of God had more Power and Authority with it than the Preaching and Doctrine of a Man or Angel could have had. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds, Heb. i. 1, 2.* Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience receiv'd a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which

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at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3. This being the last Message which God had resolv'd to send to Mankind, a Person of the greatest Dignity and Authority was to bring it: *But last of all, he sent unto them his Son, saying, they will reverence my Son, Matth. xxi. 37.* It is the last expedient, and the very utmost that could be done to reduce Sinners to Obedience; and if this will have no effect upon them, they must be left without all excuse. This is the heaviest aggravation of Sin, and that which renders Men utterly inexcusable; *he was in the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not, John i. 10, 11.* If the only begotten Son of God had not come and manifested himself in so wonderful a manner to the World, something of a Plea might have been pretended; but to reject the Son of God, was an evident despight done to the Father, and even *hating of the Father* who had sent him, as our Saviour declares, *John xv. 22, 23, 24.* And the blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, in those who vilified the Miracles of Christ, and ascribed them to *Beelzebub*, was therefore without Forgiveness, because it was a rejecting of Christ, not as the Son of Man, but as God blessed for ever, and a despising and vilifying that which is the last means that can be used to reclaim the World; and that means whereby he manifested himself to be the Son of God. To reject Christ, was to reject the whole Trinity, which was jointly concern'd in this wonderful Dispensation.

The Dignity of Christ's Person adds all the force and efficacy to his Doctrine that is possible; and therefore it was requisite, that the Son of God should become incarnate. God had before spoken from Heaven, but that was too terrible and full of Majesty to be born by Mortals; and they that heard the Voice, *entreated that the Word should not be spoken to them any more;*

more: for they could not endure that which was commanded; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake, Heb. xii. 19, 20, 21. But now God was pleas'd to converse with Man in a more familiar and humble manner; and our Blessed Saviour came to live amongst Men with all the gentleness and meekness of the Humane Nature, and all the Authority of the Divine. *For in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Coloss. ii. 9. The Godhead dwelt here in him under our Humane Nature, laying aside that awful Majesty, which no Man can approach unto.

II. We have a greater Example of all Perfection and Holiness set before us by the Son of God Incarnate, than we could otherwise have had. It has been the general complaint made of other Teachers and Lawgivers, that they seldom observe their own Rules, or live themselves according to what they require of others. But our Saviour has given us an Example, if it be possible, even beyond his own Doctrine. For tho' he be no rigorous Lawgiver, But a most indulgent and gracious Master to us, yet he was pleas'd to excuse himself from no Duty or Instance of Obedience, but fulfilled both the Moral and the Ceremonial Law: there is nothing so mean, nor so difficult and painful, but he perform'd it, to set us an absolute Pattern of Obedience to the Whole Duty of Man, in all that ever God requir'd of Mankind. *It became him to fulfil all Righteousness*; this was the end and intention of his coming into the World, and he fulfilled it in the most absolute and perfect manner, in all particulars. And to give such an Example, is of unspeakable use and benefit; for Men are more easily led by Example than by Precept; and it is commonly observ'd, that it is Example, for the most part, which governs the World. Men will follow the Vices of those whose Vertues they never imitate; and the Faults of Wise and Great Men have too sure and too fatal

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fatal an effect upon such, as their Excellencies never reach.

It was necessary, that an Example of absolute Perfection should be given to the World, and this Example must be given by one of the same nature with our selves, or else it might have been an Example for Angels and Spirits, but not for Men; and therefore such an Example the Son of God Incarnate only could give, because it was impossible for any created Being under all the Infirmities and Temptations incident to Humane Nature to live up to such a Divine Height and Excellency of all Perfection as our Saviour did, and to leave such an Example to the World,

He came not to teach us the Wisdom of this World, how to get Riches and Honours; in this Mankind was well enough instructed before, and it could not but be unworthy of the Son of God to be born into the World with a design to enjoy the Pleasures and the Profits, and the Honours of it; this was beneath the Majesty of Heaven, and the Infinite Perfection and Essential Bliss and Happiness of the Divine Nature. But to manifest himself, to shew the mean and worthless Vanity of those things, of which Men are so fond; to give an Example of Contentment in a low Condition, of Victory under Temptations, and of Patience and Meekness under the severest Afflictions and Torments; to discover to Men the way to Happiness in the worst Circumstances of this World, to teach those who enjoy this World's Goods, not to be proud of them, nor despise others; and those who want them, to be contented and happy without them; to lead Men in the way to Happiness thro' all Conditions, thro' all the Miseries and Calamities which must befall many of us in this mortal state; this is a Glorious and Godlike Design, it is such as none but the Son of God could perform, and such as we may in reason believe he would undertake; and for which he might vouchsafe to live a humane Life upon Earth.

III. The

III. The Mediation and Intercession of Christ for us, is of greater power and efficacy than any could have been, if the Son of God had not become Man to die for our sakes. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus,* 1 Tim. ii. 5. He was to be Man as well as God, that coming with Divine Power and Authority, and yet with the Affability and Accessibleness of a Man, he might in all respects be fully qualified to perform the Office of a Mediator between God and Man. If he had not been God, he could not have come with absolute Authority to offer us terms of Reconciliation; and unless he had been Man, he could not have treated with Men in so familiar and condescending a way upon these terms.

And the Right and Authority of Christ's Mediation and Intercession in behalf of Sinners, is founded upon his Merits and Satisfaction for the Sins of Men; and this supposes him to be both God, and Man; *Man*, that he might suffer and die for us; and *God*, that his Divine Nature might give an infinite value to his Death and Sufferings, and render them satisfactory for the Sins of the World. Tho' it should be supposed (which can never be proved) that God in his mercy might have pardoned Sinners without the satisfaction of Christ; yet if in mercy he might have forgiven, he might in justice have punish'd them, unless satisfaction had been made; and nothing could have made satisfaction to his Justice, but the Sufferings of his Son: Because, as the Obedience and Sufferings of no Creature could be supposed, for his Worth and Excellency, to be equivalent to the Obedience and Sufferings of all Mankind; so not only the Performance of his Obedience, and the Patience under his Sufferings, but the Innocence and Perseverance in Righteousness of every Creature, must be ascribed to the Grace and Goodness of God, not to any Power of his own to sustain himself; so far would

the most perfect and excellent Creature be from meriting for others. And because the Obedience and Sufferings of no created Being, could have been of that value as to make satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind; therefore no Creature could have redeemed Man, or have become Mediator for him upon the terms of his own Merits in Man's behalf, so as to plead the price of Redemption laid down for him. God may grant the Requests of Angels and Men, out of his free Mercy and Bounty, but there can be no necessary force and efficacy in Intercessions, where there is no precedent merit and satisfaction on the part of the Intercessor. But Christ pleads his Merits on our account, and mediates our Cause with his Father upon the terms of strict Justice, and by virtue of the Ransom of his own Blood; and is so powerful an Intercessor for us, that not only the Mercy and Goodness, but even the Justice of God cannot deny his Intercession. It was the free Grace of God to send his Son to suffer in our stead; but since he was pleas'd to admit of this Commutation of the Punishment which we had deserv'd, and to transfer it upon his own Son; his Death was *a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World*; which the Death of no Creature could have been, and therefore no created Being could have become our Mediator by virtue of his own Merit, and have satisfy'd the utmost Justice of God; much less could any Creature have merited the assistance of Grace, and the Rewards of Glory for us.

IV. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the most effectual means to excite in us Faith, and Hope, and Charity, and unfeigned Love of God, and of our Neighbour, the love of Vertue, and the hatred of Sin; and to dispose and engage us to all Vertue and Piety. The Son of God assuming our Nature, gives us the greatest assurance of his compassion for our Infirmities, and his desire of our Happiness. God is infinitely

finitely merciful in *his own* Divine Nature, but he never could give such an instance of his Mercy and Love towards *ours*, as by taking it upon himself; God is essential Truth and Holiness; and yet *willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, he confirm'd it with an Oath*; and in like manner in the present case, God being willing to give us all the grounds for Faith and Confidence in him that can be imagined, took our Nature upon him, that *by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to deceive, we might have a strong Consolation*, both from the Goodness of the Divine Nature, and from the Tenderneſs and Compassions of our own. For *we have not an High-Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*, and therefore are exhorted in this confidence, *to come boldly unto the Throne of Grace*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. vi. 17, 18. We are assured, that he has the greatest concern for that Nature which he has taken into a personal Union with himself, and continually presents before his Father in Heaven for us. And we are likewise assured of the Father's Love toward us; *For now we know that he loves us, seeing he has not withheld his Son, his only Son from us, but sent him into the World to die for our Salvation. He that spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 32, 33, 34.

And as the manifestation of Christ in the Flesh, is peculiarly adapted and design'd to raise our Faith, and Hope, and Trust, and Confidence, and Dependence upon God, so it is above all the most prevailing motive to engage our Love. The infinite Love of Christ in dying for us, must needs require and even extort from us all possible returns of Love, and Praise, and Adora-

Adoration. ^a St. Chrysostome gives this as one Reason, why the Son of God was incarnate, to become the Saviour and Redeemer Mankind; because if it had been possible for a Creature to undertake and effect our Redemption, Men would never have thought they could have had esteem enough for him, or have made due expressions of their Gratitude, unless they had Deified him, and committed Idolatry in Worshipping him, and paying him all Divine Honours: and to prevent this in *Moses*, who was but a temporal Deliverer, and but a Type of Christ, his Sepulchre was conceal'd from the *Israelites*. So dear is the Memory of great and generous Benefactors wont to be, that Men are apt to think they never can be sufficiently grateful to them, unless they even adore and worship them; which was one chief occasion of Idolatry among the Heathens: therefore the Redemption of the whole World was a thing that could belong only to the Son of God, to whom all Love and Reverence, all Worship and Adoration is due. And this being the great Aim and Design of the Christian Religion to bring us to obey God upon Principles of Love, the Foundation of it is laid in the Love of God towards us. Nothing can be conceiv'd, which could have so powerfully prevail'd upon Men to love God, as the Incarnation of his Son; and Love being the only Principle of Obedience which can be acceptable to God, this must be the most proper and fitting Dispensation, which is most apt to excite in us the Love of God. The Power and Majesty of God had been manifested before in the Creation, and Preservation, and Government of the World, and in many signal Judgments upon Sinners: the Divine Mercy and Goodness was likewise visible in the daily Blessings bestowed upon Mankind, but *the exceeding Riches of his Grace* was made

^a Chrysost. 20. 12. Tom. 7.

known in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus, Ephes. ii. 7.

And as this must cause us to love God, so it must make us, if any thing can do it, to have Love one for another. God Incarnate is the Head and Vital Principle, the common Bond of Life and Union between Christians; and we are oblig'd to mutual Love, not only because we are all of the same nature, but because the Son of God has been pleas'd to dignify that Nature in assuming it. This ought to make us value our own Nature, and to have a due Esteem and Affection for it, in whomsoever it be. How can we despise any one who is a Partaker of that Nature, of which the Son of God has vouchsafed to partake in its meanest condition? or hate any, whom he lov'd so well as to die for him? This makes all Men worthy of our Respect and Love, not of our Contempt or Hatred; they are of that Nature, which Christ, as Man, is of; and they are his Purchase, and we must love what is his, and what he has so dearly paid for, if we love Christ himself. *Beloved,* says St. John, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,* 1 Joh. iv. 11. And this is St. Paul's Argument to the Corinthians, to excite them to Charity towards their poor Brethren. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be rich,* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

The Incarnation of the Son of God must likewise cause us to have the greatest Hatred and Detestation of Sin, as being that which is most displeasing to God, and that which occasioned the Death of his only Son to atone for it. And it is evident, that all who neglect so great Salvation, must expect the heaviest Punishment for so heinous a Contempt and Provocation; if we will be gained by any Methods of Love, Christ has done all that is possible to effect it: But if we will not be moved by all the Kindness and Compassions of Love it self, we can hope for no farther Favour;

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Favour; if the Son of God came to die for us, and we will not regard it so as to be made the better by it, nothing more can be look'd for, but *Wrath and fiery Indignation*.

So that the Manifestation of the Son of God in the Flesh was the most proper and fitting means to work upon the Love, and Fear, and Hope, and all the Passions of Mankind, and to produce all those Graces in us which the Gospel requires. It is the best fitted both to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, and to the Nature of Man; and therefore if any other means had been possible, yet none that we can conceive could have been so effectual to procure the Salvation of Men.

But that the Son of God incarnate should not only suffer, but suffer to that Extremity both of Body and Mind, has been a great Objection in the Mouths and Writings of the Infidels of our days, and of all former Ages; and therefore I sh^{all} speak to it more at large. Our Blessed Saviour him^{self}, after his Resurrection, puts this Question to *Cleopas* and the other Disciple, who were walking to *Emmaus*, in great Sorrow and Perplexity of Mind, by reason of his Death; *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. Which implies, that there were great and indispensable Reasons for this wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Goodness. The Sufferings of Christ were necessary both for the Expiation of the Sins of Mankind, and for his own Exaltation in Heaven, there to become our Intercessor at the Right Hand of God the Father. They were in order to his *Enterance into his Glory*.

I. His Sufferings were necessary to expiate the Sins of Mankind. A wise and good Governour will neither pardon Crimes committed against the Order and End of his Government upon slight Terms, nor omit any due Care to provide, both that Satisfaction may be made for the Violation of his Laws, and that those

who

who have been guilty of the Breach of them, may become serviceable to him for the future. God the Father therefore, the great Lord and Governour of the World, in his Justice required such Satisfaction for the Sins of Men, as no Creature could make him; and his Son voluntarily offer'd himself for our Atone-ment: Which Proposal the Father was pleas'd so far to accept and approve, as to send the Son into the World, and permit him to be crucify'd. For there is as true and real, tho' not the same, Distinction between the Three Persons of the Godhead, as there is between the Persons of Men. And the Father and Son transacted this gracious Work of our Redemption, in like manner as a King's Son might pay down a Ransom to his Father for his disobedient Subjects, to exempt them from that Forfeiture of their Lives or Estates, which they had incurr'd.

According to this Agreement, *he who knew no Sin; was made Sin for us*, (2 Cor. v. 21.) He sustain'd the Person of Sinners, by undergoing the Punishment due to Sin. Christ's Sufferings being meritorious, were to be in that Measure and Degree, as to make it evident, that he suffer'd and merited for the whole World. He bore all the Weight and Burthen of Sin, and all the Wrath and Curse of God, which was due to it, was expiated in his Person; and for this, as well as other Reasons, he had not those Supports and Comforts under his unspeakable Sufferings and Torments, which St. *Stephen* and other Martyrs have found. But his Divine Nature was pleas'd only to sustain his Humane, not to relieve it; and to add infinite Merit to his Sufferings, not to remove or abate them. He promis'd his Disciples to send the Comforter, who would abide with them, and support them in all Temptations and Sufferings: Which Promise he constantly fulfill'd, and miraculous Graces of Courage and Patience were afforded them in all their Afflictions. But his own Sufferings were so much greater

ter than any of theirs ever were, that his Humane Nature was, as it were, *forfaken* of his Divine Nature; notwithstanding the inseparable Union of both Natures; and his Soul was left for a time destitute of Consolation, as his Body afterwards lay in the Grave, void of Life, notwithstanding the perpetual Union of the Divine with the whole Humane Nature, after its Assumption.

When it is alledged, that a much less degree of Sufferings in the Son of God would have been an Equivalent Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind; It may be sufficient to answer, that God, to manifest his utmost Hatred and Detestation of Sin, was pleas'd to demand of his own Son all that Humane Nature, in its highest state of Innocence and Righteousness, could undergo. The Vindication owing to his Honour, and the Reparation due to his Justice, could not be perform'd at an easier Price, than by the most perfect Obedience, and the extremest Sufferings.

And as the Divine and Humane Nature are personally united in Christ, so they both concurr'd in effecting our Redemption. The Humane Nature had the suffering Part, which was to be complete in its kind, and then to receive the utmost Perfection, and become fully meritorious and expiatory, by virtue of the Union between the Humane and the Divine Nature. The Sufferings of the *Son of Man*, in themselves great beyond Conception, and valuable beyond all Comparison, are of infinite Merit and Efficacy, because he is the *Son of God*.

The Humane Nature in Christ was to suffer for the Sins of the same Nature in *Adam* and his Posterity; and therefore the Measure and Degree of Suffering in the One, was to bear such Proportion to the Sins of the Other, that in our Humane Nature, the strictest and most absolute Obedience might be perform'd; and all possible Amends might be made by the Sufferings of the Humane Nature, as far as it was capable,

for the Disobedience of Mankind. But since the Humane Nature, of it self, must needs so far fall short of a full Satisfaction; the Divine Nature, in virtue of its Personal Union with the Humane, did, by infinite Merit, supply all Deficiencies. The Humane Nature was to go as far towards a Satisfaction, as it was capable; and the Union of it with the Divine Nature made out what must of necessity be wanting in any created Nature. We may assuredly conclude, that if any created Being could have effected the Expiation of Sin, it must have been the Humane Nature of Christ, in which was perform'd all, that could be done towards an Expiation, and his Divine Nature made it a full Expiation and Satisfaction.

2. Christ's Sufferings were necessary in order to his own Exaltation in Heaven. This the Scripture expressly and frequently teaches. *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour, that he by the Grace of God, should taste Death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of the Salvation perfect through Sufferings, Heb. ii. 9, 10.* Christ is here said for the suffering of Death, to be crowned with Glory and Honour, and being the Captain or Author of our Salvation, he was in his Humane Nature made perfect and fit for Glory in Heaven, through his Sufferings upon Earth. *Who in the days of his Flesh, when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to save him from Death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect he became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him, (Heb. v. 7.)* Though he be in his Divine Nature the eternal Son of God; yet his Obedience in his Humane Nature was to be made complete and entire by the things which he suffer'd, and

he was, in respect of that Nature, to be hereby rendered perfect, and fully accomplish'd, to be our Mediator and Intercessor, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God,* (Heb. xii. 2.)

Our Saviour was born of the Blessed Virgin in the greatest Purity and Innocence. But, as his Body was to receive gradual Improvements in Growth and Strength; so his Soul was capable of higher Perfections, than it brought into the World. For we read of Christ in the same Words, which are before used of St. John Baptist, (Luke i. 80.) that *the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and then it is added, that he was filled with Wisdom; and the Grace of God was upon him.* And again, *Jesus increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in favour with God and Man,* (Luke ii. 40, 52.) He was born in a state of unspotted Innocence and Righteousness, but the Faculties of his Mind advanced in Wisdom, and attain'd continually higher degrees of Perfection, as his Body improv'd in Stature.

And that he might in his Humane Nature arrive at the highest state of Perfection, of which a Creature could be capable, and might merit to be placed as Head over the whole Creation, it was necessary (as St. Paul often declares) that this Captain of our Salvation, this Author and Finisher of our Faith, should be made perfect through Sufferings, and then *enter into his Glory, and sit at the Right Hand of God the Father, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come,* (Ephes. i. 21.) *Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made subject unto him,* (1 Pet. iii. 22.)

The Exaltation of the Humane Nature of Christ was in Recompense for its great Sufferings, and these were to bear as full a Proportion, as might be, to the Reward. The Son of God, of the same Nature with

his Father, made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men. And being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Wherefore, for this Reason, and upon this Account and Consideration, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus is Christ, to the Glory of God the Father, (Phil. ii. 7.)

Some Men object: If the Son of God, incarnate, must have suffer'd; yet why must he needs have suffer'd in that manner? why to that Extremity? why with such Agonies of Soul, as well as Torments of Body? Were not a few Drops of Blood shed by the Son of God sufficient to atone for the Sins of the whole World? Was then the rest as Water spilt upon the Ground, or running waste, without any Use or Benefit? God forbid. But those who put such rash and bold Questions, may receive this full and plain Answer, That *Christ ought thus to have suffered*, because his Humane Nature was to be as Instrumental, and to contribute as much, as was possible, to the Expiation of the Sins of Men: and it was by these Sufferings to be rais'd to the highest Perfections, that any Creature could possibly attain, that in Recompense for the same Sufferings, it might receive such Honours and Rewards, as no Creature besides could receive, and might be placed at the Right Hand of God, above every Created Being. *Ought not Christ to have suffer'd these things.* that he might enter into his Glory? Into that Glory, which by the gracious and wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, was prepar'd in Reward for such Sufferings, and due to such Merit.

Another Objection is made, That the Son of God should suffer so much, and yet should himself declare, that there be few who will be saved. I shall not here repeat, what has been already said of the promulgation of the Old and New Testament throughout the World, of the reasonableness of Man's being created capable of Sin and Damnation, and of the consistency of the eternity of Hell Torments with the Justice and Goodness of God, how great soever the Number be of those who suffer them. I shall here only say, that how few soever they, who shall be saved, will be in comparison of the number of the Wicked, condemned to everlasting Punishment; yet the Salvation of all, that shall be saved, is solely owing to the Merits of Christ's Sufferings; and that the Wicked might have been saved by virtue of the same Merits, if they had not neglected their own Salvation. Let those, who urge this Objection, consider, if there be few that will be saved upon the terms of the Gospel, how many more would be saved upon the terms of natural Religion. Can Men that live in the Practice of the Crimes of Murther, Adultery, Injustice and Oppression, have any reasonable hopes of Salvation, upon any terms of Religion, whether it be natural or revealed? Or, can those, who make this an Objection against the Gospel, hope to escape better by any thing, which can deserve to be called Religion, and is agreeable to the general Notions which Mankind have, of Justice, Temperance, and common Honesty? Our Blessed Saviour has taught us the proper and useful Inference, which ought to be made from this Doctrine. *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the Door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know not whence ye are,* Luke xiii. 24, 25. When once the opportunity

nity of working out their own Salvation is lost, the Belief and Profession of Religion, nay, even Gifts of Miracles and Prophecy, will be of no advantage to evil Men; so far will prophane Cavils and Objections be from standing them in any stead. But this can concern those only, who have arrived to the use of Reason, and it is observable, that ^d great part of those, who are born, die in their Infancy; and it is certain by God's word, that Children which are Baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved. This Declaration of our Church has been the constant Doctrine of the Catholick Church in all Ages, insomuch that ^e St. Augustine looked upon him, as no better, than an Infidel, who doubted of the Salvation of Children dying after Baptism; and as to those, who die unbaptized, before the commission of Actual Sin; ^f he did not suppose their Punishment to be so great, as to make it preferable to them not to be, rather than to be. And he never retracted this

^d Of 1238 born, but 692 survive six whole years; and of 1000, but 710 arrive to the sixth year; and one half are dead in seventeen years. 1238, being then reduced to 616. Mr. Halley's estimate of the Degrees of the mortality of Mankind. Miscell. Curios. Vol. 1.

^e *Tantum valebit (Sacramentum Baptismi) ut si ante rationis usum ex hac vitâ emigraverit, per ipsum sacramentum, commendante Ecclesia charitate, ab illâ condemnatione, quæ per unum hominem intravit in mundum, Christiano adjutorio liberetur. Hoc qui non credit, & fieri non posse arbitratur, profecto infidelis est, etsi habeat Fidei sacramentum: longèque melior est ille parvulus, qui etiamsi fidem nondum habeat in cogitatione, non ei tamen obicem contraria cogitationis opponit; unde sacramentum ejus salubriter percipit.* Ep. 23.

^f *Quis dubitaverit Parvulos non Baptizatos, qui solum habent Originale peccatum, nec ullis propriis aggravantur, in damnatione omnium levissimâ futuros? Quæ qualis & quanta erit, quamvis definire non possim, non tamen audeo dicere, quòd eis, ut nulli essent, quàm ut ibi essent, potius expediret. Aug. contra Julian. l. v. c. 8. Potest proinde rectè dici Parvulos sine Baptismo de corpore exeuntes in damnatione omnium mitissimâ futuros.—Id. de Peccatorum meritis & Remissione. l. i. c. 16.*

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Opinion, tho' both the Books against the *Pelagians* in which this Doctrine is delivered, are mentioned in his *Retractions*, and the very next Chapter of the former Book is corrected, in a thing of no great moment: But in that his great and elaborate Work against *Julian the Pelagian*, he resolved to let nothing pass without censure, which he thought deserved it. This was one of his last Works, and written but a few years before his Death; which shews that he finally persisted in that Opinion concerning Infants dying without Baptism. The Book *De Fide ad Petrum Diaconum*, which was formerly ascribed to St. *Augustine*, and for which he was styled *durus infantum Pater*, was written by *Fulgentius Ruspenfis*, and is in the Editions of his Works. St. *Augustine* seems to place un-baptized Infants in a middle State, as St. ^h *Gregory Nazianzen* did, where they are supposed neither to suffer Punishment, nor to partake of Reward.

^g *Retract.* l. ii. c. 33, 62.

^h Ἠγῶμαι—τὸς δὲ μήτε δοξαζήσεσθαι, μήτε κολαζήσεσθαι, παρὰ τῶ δικαίῳ κριτῆ, ὡς ἀποφραγίσας μὲν, ἀπὸνήσας δὲ, ἀλλὰ παθόντας μᾶλλον τὴν ζημίαν, ἢ δρασάνας· ὃ γὰρ ὅσις ὁ κολάσεως ἄξιός, ἢ δὴ καὶ τιμῆς ὥσπερ ὃς δὲ ὅσις ὁ τιμῆς, ἢ δὴ καὶ κολάσεως. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 40.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXII.

Of Christ's being Tempted by the Devil.

IT may seem a very strange, and almost incredible thing, That the Son of God should permit himself to be tempted of the Devil, and that, not in such a manner, as Men are wont to be tempted; by suggestions and insinuations upon their Minds, but by being carried by him from place to place, and enduring his insults both of Words and Actions, for forty Days, as *St. Mark* and *St. Luke* assure us. That not only wicked Men, but that Apostate Spirit, the profess'd Enemy of God, the vilest and worst part of the whole Creation, abandoned to all Evil, should be suffered to make such attempts upon the Person of him, who is God blessed for ever, infinite in Holiness and in Power, might be thought Blasphemy to imagine, if we had not the express Word of Scripture for the truth of it. I shall therefore, I. Give an Account of this wonderful Dispensation: And then, II. I shall make some few Observations upon it.

I. I shall give an Account of this wonderful Dispensation. The Sufferings of the Son of God were as much the design and business of his coming into the World, as his most miraculous Works, and the most glorious Acts and Manifestations of his Divine Power. It was to make an atonement for our Sins by his Sufferings, that he descended from Heaven, and vouchsafed to dwell among Men. His Almighty Power might have been made manifest in as many, and as wonderful instances, if he had never taken our Nature upon him; but he was to become Man, that he might be capable of suffering for us. For he could suffer only in his humane Nature: and he was to suffer in his whole humane Nature, both in Body and

in Soul, all that evil Men or evil Spirits could inflict, that *the Captain of our Salvation*, in his humane Nature, *might be made perfect by these Sufferings*, and that this Nature in him might endure all, which in its most perfect state it could undergo, in satisfaction for the Sins of the same Nature in us. Christ was contented to be now tempted by the Devil, in his great Goodness and Compassion to Mankind, who were *taken captive by him at his will*, to prevent their being tormented by him for ever in Hell: Therefore *was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*. The Dispensation of the Gospel required, that Christ should be tempted by Devils, as well as tormented and crucified by Men, that he might gain an absolute Conquest over all his and our Enemies, and ascend triumphant in our Nature into Heaven.

It was no more unworthy of the Son of God to undergo the Assaults of Devils, than to suffer the Injuries and Indignities of Men, to be exposed to the Temptations of Satan, to be placed by him first upon a Pinnacle of the Temple, in order to persuade him to cast himself down from thence, and then to be removed by him to an exceeding high Mountain, the Devil endeavouring to seduce him with the Prospect of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, which, as in a Glass, were from thence represented to him in one view; all this was no more below the infinite Honour and Dignity of the Son of God, than it was for him to be dragged before *Anas* and *Caiaphas*, and then sent to *Pilate*, and by him to *Herod*, to be exposed in Royal Robes to the Affronts and Mockery of the Soldiers, to be buffeted, and spit upon, and scourged, and at last crucified: And in his last Agonies, *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death*, which forced from him that loud and dreadful Cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But there was nothing hurtful, nothing terrify-

terrifying to him in this approach of Satan. Christ bore his impious Words, and insolent Usage, as long as he pleased, and as long as was fitting, and instrumental to the Ends of his Incarnation, and then with Authority charged him to depart. He had Legions of Angels at his command, if he would have employed them against his Enemies: *But how then should the Scriptures have been fulfilled?* How had the end of his coming into the World been accomplished?

Since the Dispensation of the Gospel was not at first fully and perfectly understood by the Good Angels, but was gradually manifest to them, *Ephes. i. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.* it is no wonder, that the Devil should be ignorant of the Mysteries of the Gospel, as St. ^a Ignatius and others of the Fathers have affirmed. And he seeing our Saviour in the Wilderness for so long time, with the *wild Beasts*, as St. Mark acquaints us, and *hungry*, as the other Evangelists inform us, without any Food to sustain himself, after he had been declared the Beloved Son of God, *Matth. iii. 17.* was in doubt whether Christ was indeed the Son of God in the most proper and highest sense of the word; and to try whether he were or no, he tempts him to work a Miracle to satisfy his Hunger, by commanding the Stones in the Wilderness to be turned into Bread. It had been as easie for our Saviour to send this accursed Fiend immediately into Hell, as it could be to cause Stones to be made Bread, or to do any thing else: But that was not to be done before the time; he now confutes him from the Scriptures, and vanquishes him by the *Words proceeding out of the Mouth of God*. Our Saviour no sooner bids him be gone, but the Devil had no power to disobey. And it was not long before he shewed, that he had absolute Authority over Devils, and forced them to a confession of his Divine Power, as we read in the same Chapters of St. Mark

^a Ep. ad Ephes. c. 19.

and St. *Luke*, in which they mention his Temptations by the Devil ; and St. *Matthew* in the Chapter, in which he relates these Temptations, says, That they brought unto him from all Parts, those *which were possessed with Devils, and he healed them*, (Matth. iv. 24. Mark i. 21. Luke iv. 23.)

God's Ways are not as Man's Ways, nor his Thoughts as Man's Thoughts. Men take the first opportunity of vanquishing an Enemy, for fear, if that be lost, another may never offer it self : they take their Enemies at all advantages, and think no dispatch too speedy to rid themselves of them. But God takes his own time ; he is never in haste, who has all Seasons and Opportunities in his power and disposal. He bears with the Indignities and Blasphemies of wicked Men, and of Satan himself, when he chuses to advance his own Glory by this means, rather than by sending immediate confusion and destruction upon them.

When the Devil had left Christ, *behold*, says St. *Matthew*, *Angels came and ministred unto him*. They before kept their distance ; but now was the time for their attendance ; when Satan had been put to flight, by no force but that of the Divine Truth and Wisdom. He had deceived our first Parents in *Paradise*, and persuaded them against the express Word of God, to eat of the forbidden Fruit, to the fall of themselves, and of their Posterity. But the Son of Man, the second *Adam*, in the barren Wilderness, after long Abstinence, in great want of Food, and solicited by him out of the Scripture it self, misapplied, was so far from being prevail'd upon to work a Miracle for his own preservation, or to yield in the least measure to any of his allurements ; that he subdued this Enemy of Mankind with *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*. What could be more proper for the Son of Man, than to put to confusion the infernal Pride and Arrogance, by a few words of his mouth, without

without exerting any other Power, than that of speaking with a humane Voice, and alledging those Scriptures which were known to all the *Jews*, and contained no sublime or difficult Doctrine, but such as every Man may easily understand, and the Devil himself could not gainsay. And who knows, but this Rebuke and Disappointment might be as grievous to the Pride and Stubbornness of his Nature, as if he had been by never so great force of Torments compelled to desist.

This was the beginning of Christ's Conquests over Satan: he suffered himself to be tempted by him, and thereby, at once, both atoned the Wrath of God, by so meritorious a submission to that, which is wont to be most horrible and dreadful to humane Nature; and overcame the Enemy of Mankind in such a way, as shewed the humane Nature in Christ to be superior to all the Malice and Subtilty of the Old Serpent. When it was requisite, in order to our Salvation, our Blessed Saviour was contented to endure the Assaults of Men and Devils. *This was their Hour, and the Power of Darknes*, (Luke xxii. 53.) Men were continually his visible Enemies; and St. Luke says, *That when the Devil had ended all the Temptation, he departed from him, but for a season*, (chap. iv. 13.) But it is certain, this wicked One, who now was his tempter, was forced frequently afterwards to be his own accuser, and to confess, that Jesus was the *Christ, the holy One of God*, by the Mouths of those whom he had possessed, and by his most famed Oracles.

II. I now proceed to make some few Observations upon this wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness

1. We may observe, that this Temptation of our Saviour by the Devil, when he was alone in the Wilderness, had never been known to the World, but by the Relation of the Evangelists, who have concealed nothing of his Humiliation, and his Sufferings, which

which he endured either from Devils or Men, but insist rather more upon them, than upon any other part of his Life: Because, tho' they may be most liable to the Objections and Cavils of inconsiderate and ill Men, yet they are really the most advantageous and comfortable part of his History, to all who have been taught *as the Truth is in Christ Jesus*, and who so understand the Principles of our Religion, as to receive it in the Love of the Truth, and to live in the Belief and Obedience of the Gospel. For,

2. By this Temptation of our Blessed Saviour, his infinite Goodness towards us is more manifested and endeared to us, than by the many Miracles which he so often wrought: those shewed his Power over the whole Creation, and his Compassion to all, who were cured and relieved by him. But his Mercy is more magnified, by his condescending to suffer thus for us, than by the greatest instance of his Power. To cast Devils out of particular Persons, was an Act of great Goodness; but to permit the Assaults of Satan upon himself, that he might thereby for ever subdue him, and free Mankind from his Tyranny, was the most wonderful and gracious Effect of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness. If he had struck all his Murderers dead, and commanded all the wicked Spirits to the Depth of Hell, this had been done with as much ease to him, in respect of his Divine Nature, and without the least trouble in reference to his Humane. But the Dispensation of the Justice and Goodness of God, according to the Gospel, required that he should suffer for us; and he suffered in every kind; he refused to undergo nothing for our sakes, but was carried in a sort of Triumph by Satan himself, that the human Nature in him might become the more signally triumphant over all the Powers of Hell. Our Nature *in Christ* was to endure all that could be undergone by it, in a state of perfect Innocence and Holiness, to make satisfaction for the Sins of it *in us*. And it was the

the infinite Goodness of the Son of God to take our Nature upon him, that he might submit to be assaulted by the attempts even of Satan himself, in order to procure our Salvation.

3. He was to be a perfect Example to us, not only of all Righteousness, but of all Patience and Meekness, under all manner of Sufferings. We are not exempted from the Temptations of the Devil; but must expect to be assaulted by them; and we have frequent warning against them given us in the Scriptures, (*James* iv. 7. *1 Pet.* v. 8. *Ephes.* vi. 10.) Tho' they now befall us, not by any visible Appearance of him, but by his inward instigations, and by his contrivance and disposal of outward Objects and Accidents, to entice, or to affright us from our Duty.

And as the Apostles use earnest Admonitions and Exhortations, so our Blessed Saviour himself was pleased, by his own Example, to teach us, with Faith and Patience, and by the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, to resist and overcome this wicked One, who takes advantage sometimes of our Necessities, as he tempted Christ, after he had fasted forty Days and forty Nights, to supply his want of Provisions in the Wilderness, by turning Stones into Bread; and he often is troublesome and vexatious to us, even in the time of our Humiliation and Religious Abstinence. Sometimes he makes use of the Splendor and Allurements of this World for his Baits; as when he tempted Christ, by offering him all the Kingdoms of it, if he would worship him. And we may observe, that he enforces his Temptations by perverting the Words of Scripture to his evil Purposes. For we here find him alledging them to our Saviour; and *St. Paul* teaches us, that *Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light*; from whence he makes this Inference, that *therefore it is no wonder, if his Ministers also be transformed, as the Ministers of Righteousness*, (*2 Cor.* xi. 14.) And since we are continually

tinually exposed to so many Temptations from Satan and his Instruments, there could not be a more instructive and useful Example given us, than this of our Saviour, under Temptations of such a nature, as, it seems, are found by the Tempter, to prove successful over those, whom other Temptations would not affect, and therefore he chose out these to be employed against our Saviour himself. We here see the whole strength and subtilty of the Powers of Darknes, and the utmost they can offer, or suggest: and we at the same time see how these are to be resisted, and what defiance we must bid to this Enemy of our Souls.

4. This affords us the greatest Comfort and Encouragement under all Temptations, that can at any time befall us from this cruel and restless Enemy. Before the Victories of our Saviour over Satan, which began in the Wilderness, and became entire and universal by the propagation of his Gospel throughout the World; the Devil exercised such a Tyranny over Mankind, that he is styled, *The God of this World*, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) that is, of the Men of this World; it may be translated of this Age, or Generation, which was as wicked as has been known in any time. *We know that we are of God*, says St. John; and the whole *World lyeth in Wickedness*, (1 John v. 19.) And St. Paul affirms, that *the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to Devils, and not to God*, (1 Cor. x. 20.) *They offered up their Sons and their Daughters to Devils*. And not only in barbarous Nations, but at Athens and Rome, the Seats of the Wisdom and Empire of this World, the Devil was worshipp'd with humane Sacrifices, as well as in all other abominable ways of Wickedness. He was the God of the Heathen, who were then so much the greatest part of the World. He was the God of this Generation, or the ^b God of this

^b Ὁ Θεὸς τῆ αἰῶνος τῆς τῆς, τῆς ἔστιν, ὁ νομιθεὶς ἐν αὐτῇ Θεὸς αὐτῆς αἰῶνος τῆς. Cyril. contra Jul. l. 8. fin.

World, as it is opposite to the *World to come*, and to the Powers and Interests of it, (*Heb. ii. 5. vi. 5.*) So that he was justly styled by St. Paul, *The God of this World*, which was then so much under his Dominion and Tyranny. And he is by the same Apostle call'd *the Prince of the Power of the Air*, (*Ephes. ii. 2.*) And no more may be meant by *Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*, *vi. 12.* than the Wickedness of evil Spirits in the Air. Not, as I conceive, that the Devil has more Power over the Air, than over the rest of the Creation; but as the true God is often styled the God of Heaven; so the Devil, on the contrary, is once termed the Prince of the Air, because his Power reaches no farther, but is confined to this lower World, and because he durst not approach the Regions of Heaven, properly so called, but he is *the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Disobedience*, who walk according to the Course of this World; more especially, according to that, which was the Course of it, at the time of the Apostle's writing of that Epistle to the *Ephesians*. And though his Oracles are ceas'd, his Worship abandon'd, and humane Sacrifices, which were so generally practis'd every where before Christianity, are scarce known now in the World; and Possessions and Apparitions of Evil Spirits are seldom heard of, and much seldomer to be credited: yet he is suffer'd to be a Tempter still, but under such Restraints, that unless it be through their own Fault, his Temptations will only serve to exercise the Faith, and improve the Graces of those, against whom they are employ'd.

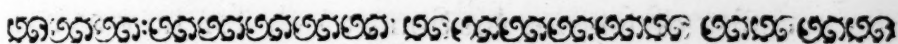
The Scripture gives us so many Cautions against the Temptations and Wiles of Satan, that there is much Reason to believe and to lament, that this spiri-

^c *Ex τοῖς ἀνεροῖς.* Marg. Heavenly, the Air being styled Heaven in Scripture, that is, the lower Heaven, or Aerial Region. The Fowls of the Air, are often call'd the Fowls of Heaven in the Old Testament, and once in the New, *Luk. xlii. 19.*

tual Enemy, this implacable Adversary loses no Opportunity to take advantage of the Humours, and Constitutions, the Passions and Inclinations of Men, that he may work their Ruin. Some he leads on in the delightful ways of Folly and Madnes; others he would drive to Despair; and to their great Trouble and Vexation, suggests to them evil Thoughts, and wicked Imaginations, which they lament and abhor, and complain that they are forced and obtruded upon their Minds against all their Endeavours to hinder it.

Now, what can be a more proper and comfortable Consideration to one in this afflicted Condition, than to remember, that our Saviour himself, who was without all Sin, yet was not without Temptation? The Devil endeavour'd to prevail with him to tempt God, and to worship himself; and his impious and blasphemous Words enter'd into our Saviour's Ears, and into his Thoughts; he heard and knew what was spoken to him; but rejected and answer'd him, not only without Sin, but with the highest Merit, and the most glorious Victory. And this, among other excellent things, we learn from hence, That no Suggestions of Satan, unless they gain our Consent and Approbation, much less if they be renounced and rejected, can be the Cause of Sin in any Man. To be tempted, whether it be by Words, or any other way, without Consent, can be no Sin: because we are assured from the Scripture, that Christ himself was tempted, who knew no Sin. In this case, to be tempted is only a Trial, and will be so far from deserving Punishment, that it will be rewarded; if he, who is thus like Christ in being tempted, be as like him in resisting the Temptation. And we are assured, that we have a *merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the Sins of the People*; and that Christ will assist and comfort us under all Temptations, upon this very account, because

he was tempted himself. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* And he is as willing as he is able to help us, on the same Consideration: *For we have not an High-Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.* These are the true Ends and Reasons, why our Saviour suffer'd Temptation; and the proper and natural Inference and Conclusion from hence, is that which St. Paul makes: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need,* Heb. ii. 18. iv. 15, 16. *The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under our Feet,* Rom. xvi. 20.



C H A P. XXIII.

Of the Fulness of Time, or the Time appointed by God for the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour.

SINCE we have so great Evidence to satisfy us, that Christ did come into the World, and die for us, it would be the greatest Ingratitude and Folly, as well as Impiety to reject him, tho' we should not be able to give any exact account concerning the Reasons for the time of his coming. *It is not for us to know the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,* Acts i. 7. These things are in God's disposal, and unless we can be contented to leave the manner and circumstances of our Salvation to his Wisdom, we only shew how little we deserve his Mercies, and how unwilling we are to believe them, and to accept of them. But tho' it be a meer Cavil to dispute the coming of Christ upon a bare Circumstance and Nice-

ty concerning the Reasons for the particular time of his Incarnation; yet it will be easie to give such an account of the time appointed for the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, as may serve to silence all Objections against it; and to desire to know any farther of it is an useless and unwarrantable Curiosity; for all must acknowledge that God may have the best and wisest Reasons for his Dispensations, which yet we may not be able to comprehend, and which it doth not concern us to know. The Scripture teacheth us, that Christ was born in the *Fulness of Time*, when all things were fulfill'd and accomplished in order to it, and the World was in a due readiness and preparation for his Coming.

1. God had before hand us'd all other means to shew the necessity of sending his Son at last, for he was not to be sent but upon necessity: and it was fit they to whom he was sent, should be sensible of that necessity, that they might the better know how to value the infinite Mercy of God towards them, in sending his only Son to be born and to die for them. In the beginning of the World, and at the Repeopling it after the Flood, Revelations were so frequent, and the Will and Commands of God so well known, and his Promise to send his Son so clearly understood, that there could be no necessity that Christ should be born then, since their Faith in him and their Obedience to God's Commandments was as effectual to the Salvation of them that liv'd so long before his Coming, as it is to us, that live so many Ages after it. The Lives of Men in the beginning of the World were so long, and the Generations deceas'd were so few before the Flood, that nothing but wilful Ignorance and Negligence could be the Cause of so much Wickedness. And after the Flood, the Race of Mankind being reduc'd to so few Persons, the Example and Instructions of *Noah* and *Abraham*, and the other Patriarchs, might have been sufficient to keep Men within the

Measures of their Duty, and to preserve a Belief and Expectation of the promis'd *Messiah*. For they were saved by their Faith in Christ to come, as we must be saved by Faith in him already come so many Ages past. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, Heb. xi. 13.* We are expressly told, that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. and that Abraham rejoiced at the distant Prospect which he had of the Coming of Christ, *Joh. viii. 56.* and he certainly, who instructed his Posterity in all parts of their Duty, *Gen. xviii. 19.* would omit nothing of that most necessary Knowledge and Faith in the Messiah. The Gospel was likewise preach'd to the *Israelites*, who came out of *Aegypt*, *Hebr. iv. 2.* and therefore to suppose it necessary that he should be born in those Ages, we must suppose it necessary that he should be born in every Age of the World, which I think no Man will imagine.

But when the rest of the World was generally fallen away to Idolatry, God chose to himself one Person, from whom by a Course of Miracles he rais'd a mighty Nation, who by their Journeyings and Captivities, and by all the Dispensations of his Providence towards them, were appointed to make known his Name and Truth among the *Gentiles*. In the time of *Moses* this People it self was incapable of that pure and spiritual Worship, which the *Messiah* was to appoint, and stood in need of a Ceremonial Law and Service to restrain them from Idolatry, and to preserve the Sense and Remembrance of the Promises and Laws deliver'd to *Adam*, and *Noah*. And this Ritual Service was unworthy that the *Messiah* should come purposely to appoint it, who was indeed himself the principal thing signify'd and typify'd by it; and the Types and Figures of himself could not be instituted by himself in Person; for then they would

have been insignificant, and there could have been no use or occasion for them. But the most excellent and Divine Institution was reserv'd for his Appointment, to which all the rest was but preparatory. *The Law was added because of Transgressions, till the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made, Gal. iii. 19.*

After the Revelation of God's Will and Commandments had, through the great Neglect and Wickedness of Mankind, become ineffectual, God sent all his Servants the Prophets daily rising up early, and sending them; an Expression setting forth his great Care and Watchfulness over his People for their Good, yet they hearkned not unto him, nor enclined their ear, but hardened their neck, Jer. vii. 25, 26. To cure this strange Stubbornness, and their Proneness to Idolatry, God sent this People into Captivity for Seventy years; which wrought so thorough a Reformation in them, that they were never afterwards given to Idolatry, but endur'd all Extremities of Torments rather than they would be brought to any Compliance with the Heathen Worship, and therefore there could be no longer such necessity that the Ceremonial Law should be continu'd to them, to keep them from the Worship of Idols: But in other respects their Provocations were still very great. And as the Lord in the Parable first sent his Servants, and last of all his Son, saying, *they will reverence my Son*; and thereby left those wicked Men without excuse, and manifested the Justice of his Vengeance upon the Murtherers of his own Son: So God first sent his Prophets, and when the Jews who had been train'd up in the Knowledge and Worship of him, and were to convey it to other Nations, would not be reclaim'd by them, but revil'd and destroy'd them, and then set up their own Traditions in Opposition to their Doctrines; he sends his Beloved Son before he would utterly take away their City and Nation, and effected that by the Death of his Son, whom they

they crucify'd, which the Experience of so many Ages had shewn could be effected no other way.

God reveal'd himself *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, and in his Infinite Wisdom proportion'd the ways and measure of his Revelations to the Capacities and the Necessities of the several Ages, in which they were made, till at last he *hath spoken unto us by his Son*, Heb. i. 1, 2. *When we were Children we were in bondage under the Elements of the World: but when the Fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law*, Gal. iv. 3, 4.

2. The Reception of Christ and his Gospel in the World would have been much more difficult, if so many Prophets in so many several Ages had not foretold his Coming. Our Saviour himself and his Apostles after him appeal to *Moses* and the Prophets for the Truth of their Doctrine; this was the great Argument which they us'd to the *Jews* in Confirmation even of their Miracles themselves, they prov'd that the Prophets had foretold that Christ should come at that very time when he came, and that he should work those Miracles which he wrought, and should empower his Disciples to do the like: His Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, were all prophesy'd of; and Prophecies thus foretelling the Miracles, and Miracles fulfilling the Prophecies, and both mutually confirming and supporting each other, afforded all the Evidence that could be given; for Prophecies and Miracles are all the ways by which God can be suppos'd to reveal himself to Mankind. And therefore thousands of the *Jews* were convinc'd out of the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, and were converted to the Christian Faith. And the Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* are still an unanswerable Argument in vindication of our Religion; which Argument we must have wanted, if our Blessed Saviour had come so much sooner, as not to have been prophesied of so many Ages beforehand.

forehand. And those who reject the Gospel now, would have thought they had had much more reason on their side than they can now pretend to have; for there had then been so much less means for their Conviction. So that the coming of our Saviour was deferr'd, to give the greater Evidence, and the fuller Conviction of his being the Christ.

It would have been hard to believe, that the Son of God should come into the World with little or no notice given of it beforehand, and few or no Prophets sent to foretel his coming, and prepare his way. But when he had been so long before Prophecy'd of, even from the beginning of the World, thro' the several Ages of it, when there had been a general Expectation of the *Messiah* to be born, and the Time, and Place, and Tribe, and Family, and Person, of whom he was to be born, by degrees, and at several times had been foretold; when Mens hopes and desires to see him were thus from Age to Age awakened and alarmed, this was a Solemnity worthy to introduce and attend the Son of God into the World, and a Method which would prove a standing Evidence of his being come into it.

3. The time of Christ's coming may depend upon things which we are incapable of knowing. For it may depend upon the duration of the World; and it is impossible for any Man to know how long that shall be. The Scripture speaks of the Times of the Gospel under the Phrase of the *last Days*, but this is to be understood in relation not to the continuance of the World, but to the Christian Dispensation, which is the last means of Salvation that God will vouchsafe to Mankind, and with regard to the *Jewish* Church and Government, which was just then at an end, as I shall shew in the next Chapter.

Now if the World may continue as long under the Dispensation of the Gospel as it had done before it, (and no Man can tell but it may) we shall find little
cause

cause to wonder, that Christ was not sooner born into the World. For we find, that the Faith and Zeal of Christians decay, as we are at a farther distance of Time from the Incarnation of our Saviour, and the first propagation of his Gospel; and the length of the Time it self, proves a Temptation to some to disbelieve it: for Men are apt to give less credit to what happened long ago, and to think themselves less concern'd in it. If therefore Christ had been born at the beginning of the World, how many more pretences would those Men have feigned to themselves for their Infidelity, who are now so prone to Unbelief, and so unwilling to be Christians?

Men are tempted to suspect, that there is something of obscurity and uncertainty in all things long since past; and if Christ had been born a thousand or two thousand Years sooner, those who now think he came too late, would then have cavilled that he came too soon, and that it was too long ago to be believed, and had happened in a dark and fabulous Age. And therefore it seems, that Christ came in the very season and centre of time; that as the former Ages were not so remote as not to be capable of all the benefits of his Death and Passion to be in due time accomplished; so the last Ages of the World may have no pretence to question the truth of the Christian Religion, upon any account of the long distance of time since the Death of our Saviour and his Apostles. This may be the Case, for ought any Man can tell; or many other Reasons there might be, much better and more important than this, to defer the Incarnation of our Saviour; and therefore it is an absurd thing to raise Objections about it. Many Reasons there might be for it, which we are incapable of knowing; and it is sufficient for us to know, that it was *in the Fulness of Time*, and that this time was the most proper and expedient, and therefore was the time appointed and determined by God from all Eternity.

4. God had, by the various Methods of his Providence, given such signal opportunities to the *Gentiles*, to become acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as did mightily prepare them for the acknowledgment of Christ at his coming into the World. All the Dispensations of the Divine Providence from the Beginning, had been as so many several preparations to the Birth of Christ; God chose *Abraham* to be the Father of a peculiar People; and when that People had been, by the constant manifestation of a miraculous Providence preserv'd, and by their Laws and Ceremonies distinguish'd from all other People, they were driven into Captivity, as well in Mercy to other Nations, as by God's just Judgment upon them for their Sins, that by this means the *Gentiles* might be instructed in the Worship of the true God, and the Prophecies concerning Christ might become divulged, and all Nations might be in a readiness to acknowledge and receive Him who was to be the Desire of all Nations, and the Joy of all People. First, the Ten Tribes were by *Shalmaneser* carried away Captive, and then the two remaining Tribes by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and *Cyrus* was by name appointed to restore them. *Alexander's* Conquests made yet way for a farther reception of the Prophecies, which were the most considerable about the time of the Captivity. And besides the Prophecy of *Balaam*, by which the Wise Men were directed to find out Christ by the guidance of a Star, those of *Isaiah*, and *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*, must be well known in the East. The Bible had been about Three hundred Years before our Saviour's Birth, at the command of a Heathen Prince translated into the *Greek* Tongue, which was by the Victories of *Alexander* become the most known Language in the World. And we read of no Revolution of Empires, no Blessing, no Affliction which befel the *Jews*, but it contributed in a remarkable manner to raise an expectation of Christ, and to prepare for his coming.

It

It is certain, that at the time of his Birth, there was among the *Jews* an universal Expectation of the *Messiah*, and that it was a receiv'd Opinion in that Age, all over the East, that a great Prince should arise out of *Judea*; this appears both from the Scriptures, and from ^aHeathen Writers: the Wise Men came to enquire after him, and *Herod's* Jealousie proceeded to the utmost Rage and Cruelty, and could not have failed of success, if it had been against any but the true *Messiah*, whom God did by an immediate Revelation deliver out of his hands. All the World stood in expectation of some extraordinary Person, and it was no unwelcome piece of Flattery to one of the *Roman* Emperors not long after, to have it reported, that he was the Prince spoken of and expected in the East, but it was esteemed his Glory, and his Happiness, to be thought the King that was to arise amongst a despised and hated People. The expectation of Christ was so great, that he could not lie conceal'd in that obscure and mean Condition, but was adored in a Manger, and receiv'd more than Royal Honours from the remotest Parts of the Earth. And in this respect it was *the Fulness of Time*, or the most convenient and proper time for Christ to appear, because the Divine Providence had wonderfully disposed and prepared the World for the expectation of him.

5. The particular temper and disposition of the Age in which our Saviour was born, made it the most fitting and proper Age for him to be born in; for there were several things peculiar to that Age, which very much conduce to the proof of the certainty of his Religion. That Age was so remarkable, and the History of it has been delivered down to us by so many eminent Writers, that it is more studied, and generally better known than any Age of the World besides; and it was fit that a thing of this nature and

^a Sueton. in *Vespas.* c. 4. Tacit. Hist. lib. v.

consequence should come to pass in such an Age, that it might be fully enquired into, in any Age afterwards, and that no distance of time might cause such doubts concerning it, as should ever render it the less certain to any, who are willing to acquaint themselves with the truth of it.

○ If it had been an Imposture, this surely had been the most unlikely time of any for it to succeed. No Prince could be more jealous than *Herod*, who was so enraged at the report of the Birth of Christ, that he too plainly shew'd how much he credited it. And no Age perhaps since the Creation, could be more unlikely to have a Cheat put upon it than this; in which, Peace, and Learning, and all polite Arts flourish'd, which refine Mens Understandings, and make them the most unfit and difficult to be imposed upon. Policy was in its highest Perfection in the Courts of *Augustus* and *Tiberius*, which have been esteemed the greatest Patterns of it ever since; the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were in great Power and Authority at *Jerusalem*, who were a subtle Generation of Men, and the worst Enemies any one could have to deal withal. Vice, which was likely to give the greatest hindrance to a holy Religion, was the fashion of the Times; and that Empire was never so abandoned to Wickedness, as at the first propagation of the Gospel. As Men were then most able to discover any Imposture, so they must have been most unwilling to find the Christian Religion true, which puts such a check to all Licentiousness, and to their beloved and long accustomed Vices. Vice would be sure to make a strong Defence, and an eager Plea; and nothing could be difficult for it to discover, when it had such a number of such subtle and devoted Advocates.

In this conjuncture of time, the Saviour of the World appears; and he appears in a mean and low Condition, despised by his own People, who soon became as much despised themselves by all the World besides.

besides. The Prince of Peace is born in a time of settled and universal Peace, when Men had most leisure and opportunity to examine and consider things; and when, by the Establishment of the *Roman Empire* under *Augustus* in its full power and extent, there was an open and free Correspondence between all Nations, and the Apostles and their Followers by this means might find a like admittance to preach the Gospel in all Countries, but to be alike hated and persecuted in all parts of the World. The Religion of Christ was not to make advantage of any Troubles and Confusions in the Empire, as that of *Mahomet* afterwards did, but to recommend it self by its own Worth and Efficacy to the most serious and impartial Minds; and under all these disadvantages, it soon made its way into the Emperor's Court, where Craft, and Luxury, and every thing that is most contrary to the purity and simplicity of the Gospel reigned. *St. Paul* had his Profelytes in *Cesar's Household*, and his Bonds in Christ were manifest in all the Palace, and in all other places at *Rome*, Phil. i. 13. iv. 22. and * Christians were to be found in the Courts of the succeeding Emperours. The truth of the Gospel approved it self to the most prejudiced Judgments, it stood all the Trials, and conquer'd all the Opposition, that Wit, and Learning, and Vice it self could make. For by the leave of the *Atheists* and *Deists* of our own Age, the Christian Religion found the subtlest and most dangerous Adversaries at its first Propagation. The *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* encountered *St. Paul* at *Athens*; and these last, especially, were inferior to no other Sect of Philosophers, either for their obstinacy in adhering to their own Opinions, or for

* *Quid autem & hi, qui in Regali Aula sunt fideles? Nonne ex iis, quæ Cesaris sunt, habent utensilia, & his, qui non habent, musquisq; secundum suam virtutem præstat?* Irenæ. l. iv. c. 49.

Hesterni sumus, & vestra omnia implevimus Palatium, senatum, forum. Tertull. Apol. c. 36.

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their art and skill in Disputation. And it appears from the several Apologies made afterwards, in vindication of our Religion, that all was at the very first alledged against it, which can with any pretence or colour be objected.

Thus was Christ born in the Fulness of Time, when all the Prophecies concerning his coming were fulfilled, and when the World was in expectation of him, and had such general notice of his coming; in a time the most unlikely for an Imposture to pass undiscover'd, and therefore the most seasonable for Truth to manifest it self; since that must needs be true, which neither Learning, nor Prejudice, nor Vice, nor Interest, could prove to be false. The Accomplishment of Prophecies, and the Conversion and Martyrdom of such numbers of Men in such an Age, recommends the Gospel to us with all the Advantage which any juncture of Time could give.



C H A P. XXIV.

Of the last Days; and of the last Day, or the Day of Judgment.

BY the *last Days*, in the Scriptures, must be meant either the last Days of the World, or the last Days of the *Jewish* State and Government, or the Days of the Gospel Dispensation; which are the last Days in respect of the Means and Opportunities of Salvation vouchsafed to Mankind.

I. The last Days of the World are seldom mention'd directly, and in exprefs terms, but under such Resemblances as were fit to represent them in the Description of other Events. For it was a known thing among the *Jews*, that their whole Dispensation being typi-

typical, whatever happened to them under their Law and Government, must afterwards be fulfilled in a more eminent manner under the Oeconomy and Dispensation of the *Messias*; and therefore the last Days of *Jerusalem* must be typical of the last Days of the World. For the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, at the conclusion of the *Jewish* Dispensation, was only a Type of the final Destruction of the World at the Consummation of all things, when Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24. For which Reason the Disciples joining these Two Questions together, *Tell us, when shall these things be? and, what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* Matth. xxiv. 3. our Saviour makes use of such words as are applicable to both of these Events, and oftentimes more fitly to the last Judgment, that after the Destruction of *Jerusalem* it might appear, that the rest remains still to be accomplished at the Day of Judgment.

^a There seems to be something in the Destruction of a great and populous City, which may naturally represent in some measure to us the fall and end of the World. But there are likewise such Expressions used, as evidently shew, that the Destruction of *Jerusalem* is the thing immediately designed in the Prophecy. This will appear, if we consider several Verses of that Chapter. *Then let them which be in Judæa, flee into the Mountains*, ver. 16. and that with the greatest haste; *for let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house*, ver. 17. *Neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his Cloaths*, ver. 18. But the Condition of such would be very miserable, who should be unfit for Flight. *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those*

^a *Civitas autem cum tollitur, deletur, extinguitur, simile est quodammodo, ut magnis parva conferamus, ac si omnis hic mundus intereat ac concidat.* Cic. de Repub. lib. iii. apud Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. xxii. c. 6.

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days, ver. 19. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the Winter, neither on the Sabbath-day,* ver. 20. There will be no flying from the general destruction of the World, but the Disciples are here warned to fly from the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and escape into the Mountains, and they are commanded to pray that their Flight might be hindered neither by the Season of the Year, nor by the Sabbath, on which the *Jews* were permitted to travel but a very little way. Which supposes, that the World was to last after the Tribulation there spoken of; and that therefore the final destruction of this material World is not the thing there immediately meant. *And except those Days should be shortned, there should no Flesh be saved: but for the Elects sake those Days shall be shortned,* ver. 22. If this Destruction should have raged long in that manner, no Man of the *Jews* could have survived it, but it was to be so abated, and so soon over, that the converted *Jews* might be preserved from it; which Promise was very remarkably and wonderfully fulfilled to the Christians at the Siege of *Jerusalem*, who made their escape into the Mountains, and retir'd to *Pella*. *For wheresoever the Carcass is, there will the Eagles be gathered together,* ver. 28. which is a plain Allusion to the Roman Eagles, or the Standards of their Armies. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken, ver. 29. This was in some respect literally fulfilled at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. But it is usual with the Prophets, by these Figures, to describe the Destruction of Nations: *They shall run to and fro in the City, they shall run upon the Wall, they shall climb up upon the Houses, they shall enter in at the Windows like a Thief: The Earth shall quake before them, the Heavens shall tremble, the Sun and the Moon shall be dark, and the Stars shall withdraw their shining,* Joel ii. 9, 10. This is a Description of the great Terrors which

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which the Enemies of Zion should bring upon her. And the false Teachers are styl'd by St. Jude, ver. 13. *wandering Stars*, because the true were as the Sun and fix'd Stars. *The Seven Stars are the Angels* (or Bishops) *of the seven Churches*, Rev. i. 20. Our Saviour himself is styl'd, the *Sun of Righteousness*, Malach. iv. 2. and the *bright and morning Star*, Rev. xxii. 16. *Balaam* prophesy'd, that a Star should come out of *Jacob*, and a Sceptre should rise out of *Israel*, Num. xxiv. 17. and that Impostor in the time of *Adrian*, who pretended to be the *Messias*, called himself *Barchochebas*, or the Son of a Star. So that by the darkning of the Sun and Moon, and the falling of the Stars from Heaven, by an unusual Metaphor, was meant the failing of the *Jewish* Worship and Government. This is agreeable to what ^b *Maimonides* relates, of the Form of Speech usual with the *Arabians*, when they would express some great Calamity, into which any Man was fallen; they were wont to say, his Heaven was fallen to the Earth. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory, v. 30. These Expressions have a plain Reference to the Day of Judgment; but the Son of Man, whose Kingdom is said to come in the day when he is revealed to the World, Luke xvii. 20—30. is described in *Daniel*, as coming in the Clouds of Heaven to receive Dominion, and establish his Kingdom over all Nations, Dan. vii, 13, 14. And by the Appearance of the Sign of the Son of Man in

^b Quando enim vaticinatur (*Isaias*) de Gentis alicujus destructione, vel de Populi alicujus magni interitu, ait Stellas cecidisse, cœlos interiisse, & contremiscere, solem obtenebratum, terram vastatam & commotam esse, aliisque multis similibus locutionibus Parabolicis utitur; sicut apud *Arabes* de eo, cui singulare aliquod infortunium accidit, dicitur, quod cœlum ipsius in terram conversum sit, vel super terram ejus ceciderit. *Maimon*. More Nevoch. Part. ii. c. 29. Consuevit enim de regno aliquo loqui ac si esset mundus peculiaris, hoc est, cœlum & terra, lb.

Heaven, seems to be meant the Establishment of this Kingdom, by the visible Profession of the Gospel, which, after the Destruction of the *Jewish* Worship, became more apparent to the World, who before made little Distinction between Christians and Jews. And *the Angels of the Churches* (Rev. i. 20.) the Messengers of Christ, and Preachers of his Gospel, were sent all over the World to convert the Gentiles, *and gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from the one end of Heaven to the other*, ver. 31. *Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled*; that is, till they be accomplish'd in their first and immediate Sense in the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was destroy'd forty Years after. But as the Destruction of *Jerusalem* was a Type and Representation, as it were, of the Destruction of the World: so there is a remoter Accomplishment, in which they will be more literally fulfill'd at the Day of Judgment.

II. These were therefore properly the last days of the City and Government of the *Jews*, who were wont to call the ^c Coming of the *Messias* the *New Creation*, according to the Prophet, *Isa. lxxv. 17. lxxvi. 22.* and the *World to come*, according to the Apostle, *Heb. vi. 5.* whereupon, in their account, the time immediately foregoing must be the last days of the former World. And thus the Apostle speaks, *they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. x. 11. which may be as truly rendred, upon whom the ends of the Times or Ages are come; for so the Word there used signifies. The World had now continued about four thousand Years, and this was the End or Conclusion of the Ages, when a new Period of Time was to begin. And the same Apostle shewing, that Christ is not like the *Jewish High-Priests*, *for then must he often have suffered, since the foundation of*

^c Lightf. *Harm. of the N. T.* §. ix.

the *World*, adds, *but now once in the end of the World* hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. where, tho' in our Translation the Word *World* be twice used, yet in the Original it is express'd by two different Words, the first signifying the visible and material World, but the latter signifying *Ages*, to teach us that Christ appear'd to suffer for us in the end of the *Ages*, not in the end of this material World; but in the last of the Dispensations or Distinctions of times. For the Apostle wou'd have used the same Word, if he had meant the same thing in both places, and would never have made so sudden a Change of Words to no purpose.

The last Days, which the Prophet *Joel* foretold, and for which he is quoted by *St. Peter*, Acts ii. 16. are the last days of the *Jewish* State and Government, which was shortly to receive its final Period; the *Jewish* Law and Power was then near its end, and the days or times just before its Conclusion and ultimate Period was the Space granted the *Jews* for their Conversion, before the Destruction of their City and Nation; and these were the last days of their Dispensation, and the last Opportunity that was to be afforded them, as a distinct and peculiar People.

III. The Scripture speaks of the times of the Gospel as the last days; which is to be understood, not with respect to the Duration of time, but to the Dispensation of the Gospel; it is the last Dispensation which God will vouchsafe to Mankind, the last means and opportunity of Salvation which will be granted to the World, and it is prophesied of under the Character of the last days, *Isai. ii. 2. Micah iv. 1, 2.* For the Opportunity and Time allotted for the means of Salvation, is wont to be styled the Day of Salvation. *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes, Luke xix. 42. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, Heb. iii. 7, 15. iv. 7.*

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For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have I succoured thee; behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor. vi. 2. Ifai. xlix. 8. So that by Day is signify'd Season or Opportunity, in the Language of Scripture, as Night is put to signify the contrary. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is Day, the Night cometh, when no Man can work, John ix. 4.

The Scriptures herein consider the Continuance and Duration of the World no otherwise than with Relation to the Dispensations which God has been pleas'd to afford Men, in order to their Salvation; and in this respect the time under the Gospel is the *last Days*, though it be of never so long Duration; because the Gospel is the last Dispensation. The last Age of the World is the Age under the Gospel, whether it be longer or shorter than the rest, and the whole Duration of this Age is styled the *last Days*, since by *Days* is not to be understood the Length or Continuance of any certain time, but the Dispensation of the Gospel, and the time under the Gospel is the *last Days*; not because the World then began to draw towards its Period or Dissolution, but because the Gospel offers us the last Opportunity of Salvation, and is the Conclusion and Period, and the final Consummation of the Grace and Goodness of God extended towards Mankind. The Gospel being the last means of Salvation offer'd to Mankind, the whole time under it is therefore sometimes styled the *last Days*, the last Distinction of Times, the last Season and Opportunity to be expected. The Duration of the World is consider'd in the Scriptures, with relation to Christ's Coming, and all the Time after his Coming is styled the *last Days*; as in the Description of the different states of *Job's* Life, the space of an hundred and forty Years of it, after his Sufferings, is styled the *latter end* of his Life; and all the precedent part is term'd the *Beginning* of it, *Job* xlii. 12, 16. In like manner

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the ^d *latter times*, 1 Tim. iii. 1. may mean only following Times, or After-times.

IV. The Day of Judgment being purposely conceal'd both from Men and Angels to keep us in a continual Watchfulness and expectation of it, the Apostle St. Paul speaks of it, as that which as to the time of it is uncertain, and therefore is at all times to be expected. And this gave occasion to some to mistake his Meaning, tho' there is nothing in his Words which implies that the Day of Judgment was then approaching. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord,* 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17. ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες, οἱ παρέλειπόμενοι, *we the living, the remaining, that is, the faithful which shall then be alive and remain upon the Earth.* St. Paul speaks of the Faithful here under a twofold Denomination, viz. of the *Dead* and the *Living*, and speaking of the *Living* he uses the first Person Plural; as being himself yet in the number of the *Living*; not that he should be of that number at the Day of Judgment.

Thus frequent ^e Examples are to be found, where Historians relating matters of Fact which happen'd long before their own Times, use the Expressions of *we* and *our*; We fought, Our Army conquer'd; that is, the People of which I am now a Member, or the Army of this People. We (the *English*) conquer'd France in the Reign of King Henry V. and if this had been prophesy'd of, it might have been said, we shall

^d ὑστερίαις καιροῖς,

^e Tollit animos (Tullus Hostilius) quasi ipse mandasset, spes inde nostris, metus hostibus, Flor. l. i. c. 3. — Stipendiariam nobis Provinciam fecit (Scipio Africanus) Hispaniam, l. ii. c. 17. Creticum Bellum, si vera volumus noscere, nos fecimus, l. iii. c. 7. Annis post R. C. ccc xii. — Papirii dicebamini. Cic. Papirio Pæto. Ep. 21. l. ix.

conquer, &c. Our Saviour speaking to the Jews, says, *Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven*, when they had told him before, *our Fathers did eat Manna in the Desert*, John vi. 31, 32. And it might as well have been said to the Patriarchs, you shall eat Manna in the Wilderness, as to the Jews of our Saviour's time, you did eat it. The Psalmist speaks, as if he had been present at the Passage of the Children of Israel through the Red Sea, and the River Jordan: *He turned the Sea into dry Land: they went through the flood on foot: there did We rejoice in him*, Psal. lxi. 6. This was after the manner, in which future Generations are taught to speak, Josh. iv. 21. And the Prophet Hosea, as if he had been with Jacob, when he met the Angel, says, the Angel found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, Hos. xii. 4. This was the constant manner of Speech, in the Form of Confession, which was appointed to be used by all, when they offer'd their First-fruits, *The Lord brought us forth out of Ægypt with a mighty hand*, Deut. xvi. 8. Indeed a whole Tribe or Nation is frequently signified under the Name of their Progenitor; as Israel, Judah, Ephraim, Esau, Moab, &c.

And a Prophet foretelling things to come to pass after his own Death, might as well say, We shall do so and so, that is, those of this Nation and People shall do it, to which I belong, and therefore reckon my self in the number, though I can have no share in the Action, nor live to see it. Jacob commands his Sons, *gather your selves together, that I may tell you, that which shall befall you in the last days*, Gen. xlix. 1. when he foretold what was to befall their Posterity in the Ages to come. He had before said to Joseph, *God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your Fathers*, Gen. xlviii. 21. Moses foretelling what Judgments were to be inflicted upon future Generations for their Disobedience, thus bespeaks those of his own Time, *when thou art in Tribulation, and all these*

these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, Deut. iv. 30.

In the same manner St. Paul says, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 'We, that is, the Living; for not being yet in the number of the Dead, he reckon'd himself amongst the present and future Living. As when he writes to the Ephesians, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, and were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others, Ephes. ii. 3. it is paraphras'd by Dr. Hammond thus, among whom we of the Gentile Church of Rome, from whence I write, formerly lived, &c. This Apostle, who so often declares himself an Israelite, and a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet sometimes numbers himself among the Gentiles: *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*, Rom. ix. 24. The Church consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, of Dead and Living, he writes, as a Fellow-Member *not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, not only of the Dead, but also of those, who should be Alive at the last day.* St. ^f Cyrill of Jerusalem upon the same subject writes after the same manner. It is certain St. Paul expected his own Death, 2 Tim. iv. 6. but it is usual with him to speak in his own Person by a Figure, and sometimes even when he mentions himself by Name, 1 Cor. iv. 6. and he expressly declares that he did neither by word nor letter signify that the Day of Christ was at hand, 2 Thess. ii. 2. to prevent or remove any Misunderstanding of his First Epistle. St. Peter speaking of the last days, gives particular Caution, that the Christians of those times should not conclude, that the End of the World was then approaching: *But, Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord, as a thousand*

^f Αλλ' οἱ δειλοὶ μὲν αὐτὰς ἀσφαλιζόμεθα· οἱ δὲ ἐυθαρσῆς παρρησιάζομεν. Catech. xv.

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years, and a thousand years as one day, 2 Pet. iii. 8. He admonishes them to take special heed not to be deceiv'd, as if the End of the World must necessarily have been near, because those were the *last Days*. For a thousand years are no more than a day in God's account, and according to that Estimation of Time, which the Scriptures make. And he farther warns them not to wrest St. Paul's Words in this case, as if he had taught any other thing, than what himself now wrote to them, ver. 16. We read indeed, & *the end of all things is at hand*, 1 Pet. iv. 7. But I presume this ought to be understood of *Persons* not of *Things*. St. Peter speaks of the End of every one's Life, by reason of the Shortness and Uncertainty of it. For this is most agreeable both to his Second Epistle, and to the Context of this Chapter. *Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the Flesh*, he exhorts Christians to live no longer in the Lusts of it: For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to Men in the Flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit: And then it follows naturally, *But the End or Death of all Men is at hand!* Be ye sober therefore, and watch unto Prayer.

We at this distance of Time may be sufficiently assured by the Event, that the Apostles were not so to be understood, as if they had taught, that the Day of Judgment would certainly overtake those, who were then living: But it was order'd by the wise Providence of God, that they should make express Declaration, that this was not their Meaning; lest an Advantage should have been taken by such, as *desire an occasion*, in these days, so much later than those, which were so long since call'd the *last Days*. The precise

ἡ Πάντων ὃ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικε.

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time of Christ's Coming to Judgment, was conceal'd not only from the Apostles, but from the Angels, and even from the Son himself, in respect of his Humane Nature, *Mark* xiii. 32. for which reason the Apostles speak of it, as a thing which might possibly be in that Age: They determine nothing concerning the Time, for it was not then reveal'd to them; but exhort all Men to live in a constant Preparation for it, according to the frequent Warning given by our Blessed Saviour: *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is, Mark* xiii. 33. Tho' in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, St. Paul plainly intimates, that the World was to continue for divers Ages. God, says he, *hath raised us up together,—that in the Ages to come, he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, Ephes.* ii. 7. which could not be said by one, who expected that the World would certainly not out-last the present Age.

V. The Day of Judgment is describ'd with so much Solemnity, and so many Particulars, that it may seem impossible for them all to be dispatched in the compass not only of one, but of many Days. But the ^h Jews, from whom our Saviour and his Apostles took the Expression of *the Day of Judgment*, understood by it a time of many Years continuance, and sometimes the term even of a thousand Years. And by *Day*, in the Language of the Scriptures, is to be understood *Season*, or any period and distinction of Time, with respect to some particular thing or occasion; as *these are the Generations of the Heavens, and of the Earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the Earth and the Heavens, Gen.* ii. 4. that is, in the time consisting of six days; *the day of temptation in the Wilderness was forty Years, Heb.* iii. 8, 9. Nay, St. Peter uses it to express eternal Duration, *to him be Glory,* says he, *both now and for ever,* which in the Original

^h Mede, *Epist.* xx.

is, both now, and to the ¹ Day of Eternity, ² Pet. iii. 18. *Day* is us'd for Judgment it self, 1 Cor. iv. 3. and ^k so the *Jews* understood *Days* to be meant, Job xxiv. 1. In our Language, *Days-man* signifies Judge or Umpire, Job ix. 33. and *Diem dicere* was the Law-term amongst the *Romans* for the Summons to a Tryal; but it doth not follow from thence, that the Cause must needs have been decided upon the same Day, which was appointed for the hearing it. ¹ Tully by *Day*, in his first Oration against *Verres*, means the space of at least Fifty Days. There is no reason then to suppose, that the last Judgment must be confined to one or more Days; but it will take up as much time as the Solemnity of the Proceedings requires.

—Hunc diem Judicii ultimum diem dicimus, id est, novissimum Tempus. Nam per quot dies hoc judicium tendatur, incertum est: sed scripturarum more sanctorum diem poni solere pro tempore, nemo qui literas illas quamlibet negligentè legerit, nescit. Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. xx. c. 1.

¹ Καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἀνάπαυ αἰῶν. Ipse gloria nunc & in diem eternitatis. Edit. Vulgat.

^k Grot. ad 1 Cor. iv. 3.

¹ Itaque cum ego diem in Siciliam inquirendi perexiguam postulasset, invenit iste, qui sibi in Achaiam biduo brevior diem postularet: non ut is idem conficeret diligentia, & industria sua, quod ego meo labore & vigiliis consecutus sum. Etenim ille Achaicus inquisitor, ne Brundisum quidem pervenit. Ego Siciliam totam quinquaginta diebus sic obii, ut omnium populorum, privatorumque literas injuriasque cognoscerem. Cic. in Ver. Orat. i. Diem, Dies feminino genere Tempus: & ideo diminutiva diecula dicitur breve tempus & mora. Dies horarum xii. generis masculini est, unde hodie, quasi hoc die. Afcon. in loc.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXV.

Of Sacraments.

TH^{O'} the *Jewish* Law was very requisite at that time, and for that People, when it was in force, and the wisest and best Institution that could have been, yet it was indeed a Yoke, and such a Yoke as was burthensom, and not to have been born, but in sure hopes and expectation of better things to come. And at the approach of the Sun of Righteousness these Shadows vanished, and the Types having attained their end and accomplishment, were laid aside; and in their room, Christ has instituted as few Rites as it was possible; only the two Sacraments; one for our Initiation and first Reception, and the other for our Re-establishment and Confirmation in that Covenant, which he has been pleas'd to make with us. And yet even these are thought too many by some, who, as if they were all Soul and Spirit without Body, are only for a mental and spiritual Worship. To vindicate therefore the Institution and use of Sacraments, I shall, *First*, consider the Nature and Design of Sacraments in general; *Secondly*, I shall shew how fully the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper answer the End and Design of the Institution of Sacraments.

I. I will enquire into the Nature and Design of Sacraments in general. Sacraments may be consider'd, either, 1. As outward and visible Signs of our entrance into Covenant with God, or of our renewing our Covenant with him. Or, 2. As Pledges of God's Grace and Favour towards us. Or, 3. As the Means and Instruments, whereby he is pleas'd to convey into our Souls the blessed Influences of his Holy Spirit. Or, lastly, they may be consider'd as visible Rites, whereby we are admitted into the visible Society of Christ's

Christ's Church, or profess our Communion with it. And in all these respects it will appear, how beneficial and requisite the Institution of Sacraments is, and how fitting it is that God in his Dispensations with Men should appoint something outward and visible to be done, or received by them.

I. Ceremonies and Rites of Initiation and of Worship, have been instituted in all Religions, which is Evidence sufficient, that the Nature of Man requires them, and that our Worship cannot be wholly mental and spiritual. And God is pleas'd in his Dealings with Mankind, to condescend to their Capacities, to ascribe to himself their Passions, to allude to their Customs, and to make use of such Means and Methods as Men are accustomed to in their Dealings with one another. He best understands humane Nature, and knows all the dispositions and tendencies of it; *he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are dust*, Psal. ciii. 14. He considers that we are Flesh as well as Spirit; he fully comprehends the strict Union between the Soul and the Body, and the cause and manner of it, and how great influence the one hath upon the other in their several Operations; he planted in us all our Powers and Faculties, and sees all their Motions and Inclinations, the secret Springs of Action and Passion, and has accordingly fitted and proportioned the Institution of his Laws and Ordinances.

We see among Men, that they are not content only to understand one another's Meaning, or to express their Minds in words, tho' they be the most solemn and significant; but are wont to use some Ceremony and Solemnity of Action and Circumstances in matters of great importance; because this makes greater impression upon the Mind, and lays upon it a more forcible and lasting engagement by taking in the Senses and Passions, as Parties concerned with it; and this is by experience found to have the best effect to all the ends and purposes of Agreement and Obliga-
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tion between Men. Oaths themselves are not found to be so secure to be rely'd upon, when they are only pronounc'd, as when they are taken with such Circumstances of Words and Gesture, as may create an awe and reverence in those who take them. For the manner and circumstances in which any Action is done, raise and fix the Attention, and express the Mind and Design of the Doer, and are better retain'd in the Memory, and work more upon the Will and Affections, than the Action it self can do. This Orators very well understand; for the Art of Rhetorick is almost nothing else but a skilful management of the circumstances of Actions to the advantage of a Cause. And Philosophy informs us, that the evil or goodness of Actions depends chiefly upon their Circumstances; from whence we learn what the intention of the Mind is, and to what degree of Resolution it came in the performance of any Action. If an Action be performed at a solemn time and place, in the presence of Witnesses met together for that very purpose, upon great deliberation; with such Words and Gestures as are very significant to express our full Design and Intention; all these Circumstances consider'd, make it much more our own proper Act and Deed than if it were done without them, tho' the Intention were the same. For what we declare before others to be our mind and purpose to do, or undertake, we cannot but think our selves bound to, under more Obligations, than if we barely design'd it, or promis'd it only to the Persons concern'd; because the design of declaring it, is to lay upon our selves a farther Obligation to perform it, and to call others as Witnesses against us, if we neglect the performance of it; and since our Resolution may be declar'd as well by Actions as by Words; he that expresses his Resolution both these ways, shews a farther design to oblige himself, than if he should only use words to express it; and if the Circumstances of Actions be stated, and solemn and significant,

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ficant, then all the ways and means concur, by which it is possible for Men to declare and express their Minds in any case, and to oblige themselves to the performance of any Covenant.

Now Sacraments are the Seals of the Covenant between God and Man; and when God is pleas'd to receive Men into Covenant with himself, it is requisite that Men should not barely give their assent to the Terms and Conditions of it, and declare that they will undertake them; but it is farther necessary, that this should be done with all the Solemnity of Words and Actions that may engage them to the performance of it, and render them inexcusable if they transgress it; it is fitting it should be entred into, and renewed in the presence of Witnesses, that the Words should be solemn, and the Actions significant, and that nothing should be wanting which may testify the Sincerity, and secure the Fidelity of the Undertakers. For if Covenants between Man and Man be made with all the formality of Witnesses, and Hands and Seals, and Delivery in solemn and express words; if Men know themselves too well to trust one another without all this Solemnity, it may well be expected, that when God is pleas'd to permit them to enter into Covenant with himself, he should not receive them under less obligations of Caution and Security for their Integrity, than Men are wont to use amongst themselves. For every breach of Covenant with him, is infinitely more affronting and sinful than any breach of Covenant with Man can be; and therefore God, who will not be mocked, has appointed the most effectual Means to secure his Laws from contempt; he knows the deceitfulness of Man's Heart, how perverse and stubborn it is, especially in things of such a Nature as these are of, to which Men are obliged by that Promise and Vow that they are required to make to him; and that all the Restraints and all the Remembrances which Words or Actions can afford, are little

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enough to keep Men in any tolerable measure to their Duty.

God was pleas'd to confirm his Promise to *Abraham* with an Oath; and therein shew'd himself willing to give all the assurance that the most incredulous Man can desire, of the fix'd and unalterable steadfastness of his purpose, and the *immutability of his Counsel*, that we might have a strong Consolation, Heb. vi. 17, 18. And when God himself is pleas'd so far to condescend, for our comfort and satisfaction, it is most reasonable that he should oblige us to perform our part of the Covenant, by all the ways that may put us in remembrance of our Duty, and make us faithful and constant in the performance of it. And this could be effected by no better Means, than by outward Acts and visible Signs to testify and profess in the most serious and solemn manner, what our inward Faith and Resolutions are. This is that sort of security which Men have of one another, and when God makes a Covenant with Men, he considers them as Men; that is, he appoints such Solemnities of it as have respect to the Body as well as to the Soul; he doth not deal with us as with immaterial Spirits, but as with Creatures consisting of Soul and Body, and who little regard, and are little affected with that which doth not some way concern the one as well as the other.

And it is strange to see to what Extravagancies those have proceeded, who have set up for a purely spiritual Worship, without any thing Sacramental for a visible Sign in it. For not to mention the Pretensions of our *Enthusiasts*, who by decrying the use and necessity of Sacraments, have made Religion nothing but an empty and uncertain Name amongst them, *Porphyry*, who was a Man of Study and Learning, after he had Apostatiz'd from the Christian Religion, upon a ridiculous Occasion, as ^a History relates it,

^a Euseb. apud Socrat. Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

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was ashamed to return to the Heathen Idolatry, which after the appearance of Christianity in the World, soon became too notoriously absurd and abominable for any Man pretending so much to Reason and good Sense to own it; but he placed all Divine Worship in mental Prayer, and so far rejected all outward and bodily Worship, ^b that he pretended the Prayers of Men were polluted and defiled by any thing of that nature, and rendred unacceptable to the Deity; and that they never were sufficiently pure and perfect, if they were express'd by the Voice, but were then in their highest degree of Perfection, when they were all Contemplation, and Rapture, and Extasie. And the very same Notions were taught by ^c *Apollonius Tyanæus*, and have been revived of late by such as undervalue all outward Ordinances, which may be a Warning to others, and an Evidence of the Divine Wisdom in appointing Sacraments as outward and visible Signs of our Covenant and Communion with God.

2. As these outward Signs serve to raise our Attention and fix our Minds, and to put us in remembrance, that Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, are witnesses against us, if we prove treacherous and unfaithful in this Covenant; so they are as Tokens and Pledges to us of God's Love and Favour, and of his merciful and gracious Intentions towards us, in taking us into Covenant with himself; they give us sensible and visible Assurances of that Grace, which is invisible and spiritual. And this seems but necessary for Creatures that are led so much by Sense, as we all are in this Life, that God, together with his Word and Promises, should besides appoint something which may be perceiv'd by our bodily Senses, in token of those Blessings which are bestow'd upon the Soul, that what is no Object of Sense, may yet be represented and signi-

^b Porphyr. de Abstin. lib. ii. §. 34.

^c Euseb. Præpar. Evang. lib. iv. c. 13.

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fied by something that is sensible; to bring, as far as it is possible, the most divine and heavenly Things down to our very Senses; which may be a Sign and Token of present Grace and Favour, and a Pledge and Earnest of future Glory and Happiness. And this is what is found very useful and necessary amongst Men, who are better contented with something present, and in hand, tho' of little value, and insignificant in it self, as a Token and Pledge of what is promised and made over to them, than they are with the greatest Promises and Protestations without any thing as an Earnest to confirm them; because this is a natural Evidence, that they are indeed in *earnest*, (as our *English* word expresses it) and really intend what they say, and it may be produced against them, if they should fail of Performance. Now what is inward and invisible, is absent as to Sense; and what is future, has need of something present, to represent it to us: And God who was pleas'd to bind himself even by an Oath for our farther Comfort and Trust in him, has been pleas'd likewise, that he might be wanting in nothing, which might help our Infirmities, and assist our Faith; he has been pleas'd in Condescension to the Condition and Frailty of Humane Nature, to appoint visible Signs and Pledges of that which is Invisible, and to give all the Assurance to our very Senses that they are capable of, that all the Promises of his Spiritual Blessings and Graces shall as certainly be fulfill'd to us, as the outward Signs and Pledges are appointed for us, and duly received by us.

3. Sacraments are not only Signs and Tokens of Spiritual Gifts and Graces, but they are ordain'd as Means and Instruments of Grace and Salvation to us; that as the Body partakes in the Moral Actions of Virtue and Vice, so it might concur in the Religious Acts ordain'd for our Sanctification. For God, who has made us so as to consist of Soul and Body, and to

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have the Vital Union between Soul and Body depend upon a fit Disposition of the Body, and to be maintain'd by the Health and Nourishment of it, has been pleas'd to appoint certain Bodily Actions as the Means and Instruments of our Spiritual Life, that the Soul might not, even in this Case, where it self is more immediately concern'd, be wholly independent of the Body; but that since both must be either happy or miserable together in the next Life, both might concur in the way and means of Salvation in this; yet so as that the Soul should be the first and principal Agent, and the Body should act only in Subordination and Subserviency to it in this, as it doth in other Cases; that as in Moral Actions the Soul acts virtuously or viciously by the Body; so in Spiritual Actions the Soul might receive Advantage and Benefit by Bodily Acts, and be deprived of it upon the Omission or Neglect of such Acts.

The Body without the Soul is not the Man, nor the Soul without the Body, but both Soul and Body together, and the whole Man becomes dedicated and consecrated to God's Worship and Service in the use of Actions perform'd outwardly in the Body. And it is requisite that the Body, as well as the Soul, should be thus dedicated to God in token of the Resurrection of the Body, and of that Happiness which it must receive in Heaven, if the Soul be happy. St. Paul exhorts the *Corinthians to glorifie God in their Body, as well as in their Spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. he tells them, that *the Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the Body: know ye not, says he, that your Bodies are the Members of Christ? what? know ye not, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?* There have been those in several Ages, who have made such high Pretences to Spiritual Worship, that they would allow the Body no part or share in it; and others, from the great Irregularity and Corruption which they could not but observe in their Carnal Appetites, have concluded that

that the Body was made not by God, but by a wicked Being, and that the Soul only was from God. Since therefore God is pleas'd to regard our Bodies as Members of Christ, and Temples of the Holy Ghost, it was requisite, that in contradiction to these, and such like Errors, they should by some Rite or Sign be devoted to him, by which it might be declared, that *Christ is the Sav'our of the Body*, Ephes. v. 23. by which we might become united to Christ our Head, and to his Mystical Body the Church, and by which such Grace might be communicated, as to render our Body the Temple and Place of Residence of the Holy Ghost, set apart and dedicated to him, and inhabited by him, that *the whole Spirit and Soul and Body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Thess. v. 23. It is the great and gracious Design of God to sanctify the whole Man, and therefore Christ took not only an Humane Soul, but Humane Flesh likewise, to dignify it in the Assumption, and offer it upon the Cross, and translate it into Glory. And as his Incarnation shews the particular Regard he has for the Body as well as for the Soul of Man, so the whole Institution of the Gospel hath relation to both.

4. Lastly, The Sacraments are Fœderal Rites of our Admission into the Church, as into a visible Society, and of our Union with it as such. For we cannot be admitted into a visible Society, nor communicate with it, but by visible and outward Acts, which must be perform'd in the Body.

So that whatever way we consider the Sacraments, either in respect of God, or of our selves, or of others, there is a necessary use and benefit from them, and evident Reason for their Institution. They are requisite as Symbols of our Entrance into Covenant with God, or of the Renewing and Confirmation of it, and of dedicating both our Bodies and Souls to his Honour and Service; they are Instruments of his Graces, and Pledges of his Promises made to us by Cove-

nant, and of the Reward and Happiness both of our Bodies and Souls at the Resurrection; and are visible Marks and Evidences of our Profession, as Members of the Church, of our Admission into it, and our Communion with it.

II. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper fully answer the End and Design of the Institution of Sacraments. After the Coming of Christ, and the fulfilling of the Ceremonial Law by him, it was of no longer use or continuance, the Gospel being to introduce a Spiritual Service, by teaching Men to *worship God in Spirit and in Truth*: Yet there was need of some external Ordinances or Sacraments, the Nature of Man, and the State of this World requiring them; but that they might be as few as possible, Christ has appointed but two Sacraments *as generally necessary to Salvation*, and these the fittest and most expedient for the benefit and wants of Men.

I. As to Baptism, the Reasons and Designs in the Institution of Sacraments are all visible in it. It is a very significant and apt Representation of the cleansing and purifying the Soul from Sin, and in this Men of all Nations and of all Religions seem to have been agreed. For nothing was more frequent among the *Heathen* than their Washings and Purifications; and though they attributed a great deal too much to them, yet the superstitious Opinion which they had of these outward Cleanings, could never have so universally prevail'd, if there had not been some Foundation for the use of them in the Nature of Things, and that is the great Fitness which is in these outward Washings to excite us to Purity of Mind, and to represent the great Duty which lies upon us, to keep our Consciences undefiled, which only can render us accepted with God.

And as these Washings and Purifications were common in other Religions, so the *Jewish Church* was

wont to receive Profelytes or Converts by Baptism; for which Custom they alledge the Command of God to *Moses*, *Exod. xix. 10.* but ^d *Dr. Lightfoot* sets it higher, and thinks it was begun by *Jacob*, *Gen. xxxv. 2.* And our Saviour, who both in his Words and Actions throughout the whole Gospel, condescended to a Compliance with the Customs in use among the *Jews*, so far as they might be serviceable to the ends of the Gospel, was pleas'd to make choice of Baptism for the Admission of Persons to the Profession of his Religion, as the *Jews* used it for the Admission of their Profelytes.

Baptism is very agreeable to the Nature of the Christian Religion, being a plain and easy Rite, and having a natural Significancy of that Purity of Heart, which it is the Design of the Gospel to promote and establish in the World; and it is fitted to represent to us the cleansing of our Souls by the Blood of Christ, and the Grace of Purity and Holiness, which is convey'd in this Sacrament, and the Spirit of Regeneration which is conferr'd by it, *John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5.* And it being in use both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*, it was so much the more proper, because both had already an Opinion of the Expediency of it. Christ came to abolish the Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law, and the vain and idolatrous Superstitions of the *Heathen* Worship, and yet some outward Rite of Worship was necessary to be made use of, to dedicate the Body as well as the Soul to God's Honour and Service, to be a Pledge of the Resurrection of the Body, as well as of the Immortality of the Soul, to put Men in mind of that Integrity and Purity of Life which the Gospel requires, and to be a means of conveying it, and to admit them as visible Members into the Church. And as Baptism was very expedient to be instituted upon all these accounts, so it had this peculiar Ad-

^d *Hebr. and Talmud Exercit. on Matt. iii. 6.*

vantage beyond any other Rite, that it was already in great use and esteem, and could seem strange neither to *Jews* nor *Gentiles*; but it had been a very strange thing to both, and very unsuitable to the Nature of Man, if the most Spiritual and Heavenly Religion, that can be, on this side Heaven, had been instituted without any external Rite for the Admission into it; this had been to suppose the Church to consist of Angels and not of Men, who have need of Assistance from outward Objects in their highest Acts of Religion; it had been to make Men to suspect that the Body (as some Hereticks imagin'd) was little regarded of God, if no Notice had been taken of it, at our Reception into Covenant with him; and it besides had been to contradict the Notion which Mankind have ever had of Religion, and to give the highest Scandal both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is so often the Subject of Sermons, and of every good Christian's Meditation, that very little needs to be here said of it. For it is evident that the Elements of Bread and Wine have a peculiar Suitableness to bring to our Remembrance the Body and Blood of Christ offer'd upon the Cross for us, to make us Partakers of them, to become the commemorative and representative Sacrifice of the Eucharist, and to be Pledges of all the Benefits which we receive thereby. And as the Eucharist was appointed by Christ in the room of the Paschal Supper: so Bread and Wine were in use among all Nations in their Religious Worship; and nothing can more fitly express our Communion with God and with one another, than to be entertain'd together at God's Table.

So that since there must be Sacraments or External Rites and Ordinances, they could neither be fewer, nor more suitable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, and to the Wants of Christians, than the Sacraments of Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper are.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVI.

Of the Blessed TRINITY.

I Am not here to prove the Doctrine of the Trinity from the Scriptures, but to suppose this to be the Doctrine which the Scriptures teach, and to shew that no reasonable Objection can be brought against the Christian Religion upon that account. And indeed this was suppos'd to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, and objected against by ^a *Heathens* long before the Council of *Nice*. Which is a strong Proof for the Truth and Antiquity of this Doctrine, when it was so well known even to the *Heathen*, that they upbraided the Christians with it in the second Century, and in all probability from the very beginning; for we find it then mention'd as a known and common Reproach. Supposing then this to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God, I will shew,

I. That there is no Contradiction in this Mystery of our Religion.

II. That other things are and must be believed by us, which we as little understand.

III. That the Belief of this Doctrine doth mightily tend to the Advancement of Vertue and Holiness, and hath a great Influence upon the Lives and Conversations of Men.

I. There is no Contradiction in this Doctrine. We are ignorant of the Essences of Created Beings, which are known to us only by their Causes and Effects, and by their Operations and Qualities; and our Reason and Senses and Passions being continually conversant about these, our Notions are form'd upon the Ideas

^a Lucian. Philepatr.

which we frame to our selves concerning the Creatures, and this makes us the less capable of understanding the Divine Essence, besides the infinite Disproportion between the Nature of God, and Humane Faculties. When we say, that God is an Infinite and Incomprehensible Being, we speak the general Sense of Mankind, and no Man cavils at it; but because the Scriptures represent this Incomprehensible Being to us under the Notion of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is Matter of Cavil and Dispute. Whereas God being essentially Holy and True, we must believe him to be what he declares himself to be in the Scriptures, and he being Incomprehensible, we may not be able to comprehend it. If God be infallibly True, why do we not believe what he delivers concerning himself? And if he be Incomprehensible, what Reason can be given why the Divine Essence may not subsist in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? These are styled Three Persons, because we find distinct Personal Acts and Properties attributed to them in the Scriptures; and we may suppose Three Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature without any Appearance of Contradiction. This will be evident, if we consider,

1. The Distinction of the Three Persons in the Deity.
2. The Unity of the Divine Nature.
3. The Difference between the Divine Persons, and Humane Persons.

1. The Distinction of the Three Persons, in the Deity. The Divine Nature is in Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in the Father Originally, without either Generation or Procession; in the Son, as communicated to him by the Father, not in any such way as Sons amongst Men have their Nature derived to them from their Fathers, but yet in some such manner as is best express'd to our Apprehensions, by styling him the Son of God, tho' the Manner of his Generation is altogether incomprehensible

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fible to us. The Holy Ghost has the Divine Nature communicated to him from the Father and the Son, not in the same way whereby the Son has it communicated to him from the Father, but in some other different incomprehensible manner, whereby he is not begotten, but proceeds both from the Father and the Son. The Divine Nature is communicated by the Father to the Son by Eternal Generation, and by the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost by Eternal Procession: We have nothing farther reveal'd to us of the Generation of the Son, but that he is begotten, or has receiv'd the Divine Nature from the Father in some such way, as, for want of a fitter Word, we can best understand by the Term of Generation; and the Scripture teacheth us no more of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, but that he is not begotten of the Father, as the Son is, but proceeds from the Father and the Son some other way, and not by Generation. But as he that would discourse to a Man born blind, concerning Light, must use many very improper Expressions to make himself, though never so imperfectly, understood; so it is here; we have no Words that are proper, but these are sufficient to teach us all which we are capable of knowing, at least all that is necessary for us to know of the Godhead.

2. The Unity of the Divine Nature. To say that Three Gods are one God, or that Three Persons are One Person, is a manifest Contradiction; but to say, that Three Persons are (not One Person, but) One God, is so far from a Contradiction, that it is a Wonder how it should be mistaken for One by any who understand what a Contradiction means. *The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not Three Gods, but One God.* For neither of these Three Persons is God distinct and separate from the rest, but they all are but One God; *One Lord (Jehovah) not Three distinct and separate Lords, and so not Three Eternals, nor Three Incomprehensibles, nor*
Three

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Three Uncreated, nor Three Almightyes, distinct and separate from each other; but all the Three Persons together are One Eternal, Incomprehensible, Uncreated, Almighty Lord, God.

It is Matter of Dispute, what is the Principle of *Individuation* in Men, or what it is which causes one Man to be a different Individual Person from another; and it is still more difficult to find out the Principle of Individuation in Beings which are purely Spiritual, and have nothing of Material Accidents to distinguish them. But whatever the Principle of Individuation in Men may be, it is certain that the Consequence of it is, that two Men may exist separately both as to Time and Place, and that one may know more or less than the other, they may live at a distance the one from the other, and can never at once fill the same Numerical Place, nor is their Knowledge the same: there is nothing in their common Nature to determine them, that they should be born or die together, or that there should be any mutual Communication of the Thoughts, and Operations of their Minds, much less that their Life, and Death, and Operations, should be all the very same. So that this Principle of Individuation, whatever be assigned to be it, cannot belong to the Divine Nature, which is Omnipresent, Eternal, and Omniscient; the Existence, Knowledge, and local Presence of Men, are *Personal*, not *Essential*, but Omnipresence, Eternity, and Omniscience, are *Essential* Attributes of God, and not *Personal*, or do not belong to each Person, as they are distinguished from one another, but as they are united in the same Essence; for they are predicated of the Father, as God; of the Son, as God; and of the Holy Ghost, as God; and not of each severally, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost. Every of these *Essential* Attributes therefore cannot be numbred with the *Persons* in the Deity, but can be but One, as the *Essence* it self of the Deity is, and tho' *the Father be Eternal, the Son Eternal, and*
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the Holy Ghost Eternal, yet they are not Three Eternals, or Three individual Beings of Eternal Existence, as Three Humane Persons are Three Men of a Finite Existence. It is a Contradiction that there should be Three separate Infinite Persons; for their being separate, must suppose them to be Finite, or to have a limited and confined Subsistence; and therefore Three Infinite Persons can be but One God, or One Being, which has all the Perfections of Personal Distinction, without the imperfection of the Division of Persons.

3. From hence appears the Difference between the Divine Persons and Humane Persons. The Persons of Men, are distinct Men as well as distinct Persons; but this is no ground for us to affirm, that the Persons in the Divine Nature are distinct Gods, because the Divine Nature is acknowledged to be Infinite and Incomprehensible; and when we speak of Three Persons in it, we do not mean such Three Persons as Three several Men are. But we read of the *Person* of the Father, *Heb. i. 3.* and of *Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One, 1 John v. 7.* and when we speak of Three intelligent Beings, we can have no Conception of them, but under the Notion of Persons. We learn from the Scriptures, that there are Three Persons in the Deity, which bear that Relation to each other, which is best express'd by the Terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but the Terms of Father, Son, and Spirit, are not therefore so to be understood, as they are in humane Relations; and the word *Person* is not to be understood, as it is of humane Persons; and therefore whereas we use the word *Person*, the *Greeks* call them ^b *Substencies*, but acknowledge that they mean the same thing under that difference of words.

^b Greg. Naz. Orat. 21.

And yet this is all the Foundation of any pretence of contradiction in the Notion of the Blessed Trinity, that Men will needs understand the Terms of Person, and of Father, Son, and Spirit, when they are applied to God, as they do, when we speak of Men; and from thence they conclude, that Three Persons in the Divine Nature must be Three Gods, as Three Persons amongst Men are Three Men; and that the Father must be superior and elder than the Son, as it is in humane Generations. But this is all mistake; *Adam* is styled *the Son of God*, in a sense of the word peculiar to himself, *Luke iii. 38.* God is, in one sense, the Father of all Mankind; and, in another sense, he is the Father of the Regenerate only; and when, in either sense, we call him *our Father*, we take not the word *Father* in the same sense that we take it in, when we apply it to Men; and when we say, he is the Father of his only begotten Son, this is another sense of the word *Father*, very different from all the former. The Relation between the Father and Son, is not the same in the Nature of God that it is amongst Men, nor are the Divine Persons such as the Persons of Men are; but these are the fittest, and the most proper and significant Terms, to express the Nature of God to us, that humane Language and humane Understandings are capable of. We must acknowledge, that there is a vast disproportion and impropriety in these Expressions, and that they give us but a very imperfect conception of the Divine Nature; but it is the most perfect that we are able to have of it, or that it is necessary for us to have of it in this mortal state; and if we will but allow for the incompetency of our own Faculties to have Words and Notions adequate to the Divine Nature, and will remember that God is God, and that we are but Men, there will appear to be no contradiction in the Notion of the Trinity.

The Divine Nature is such, that it has Three distinct Principles of Operation and Subsistency, which are

are so described and represented in the Scriptures by Personal Acts and Properties, that we know them to be as really distinct as humane Persons are, which yet being but One God, cannot in this respect be like humane Persons. And whoever will oppose this Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, must prove that the Three Persons of the Trinity cannot be as really distinct, as the Persons of Three Men are, tho' they are not such Persons as the Persons of Men. And to prove this, he must understand the Nature of God, as well as he understands the Nature of Man; for otherwise he can never be able to prove, that Three Divine Persons may not be One God, tho' Three Humane Persons cannot be One Man. That they are distinct Persons is revealed, and that these Three distinct Persons are but one God is revealed, but wherein the Distinction and the Unity of these Three Persons consists is not revealed, nor is it possible for us to understand it, at least without a Revelation. The Distinction of the Persons of Men is founded in a separate and divided Subsistence, but this cannot be the Foundation of the Distinction of the Divine Persons, because Separation and Division cannot belong to an Infinite Nature. There is then no Repugnancy in saying, that there are Three Subsistencies, or Three distinct Principles of Personal Acts and Properties in one undivided Infinite Nature, or that the Persons in the Trinity act as distinctly and personally, as Persons do amongst Men, but are united in one Infinite Nature, which is incapable of existing in separate Subsistencies, tho' not of acting and subsisting in Three distinct Persons, or as distinctly from each other, as the Persons among Men do act and subsist.

The Sum is, that in the most perfect Unity of the Divine Nature, do subsist the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, between whom is a real Distinction, which tho' not the same, yet is equivalent to the Distinction of Persons among Men. That there is this
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Unity and this Distinction, ^c we learn from the Scriptures; but what kind of Distinction this is, or how far it is to be reconciled with our Notion of Persons amongst Men, and after what manner it is consistent with the Unity of the Godhead, the Scriptures have not told us, and it is impossible for us to determine.

II. Other things are, and must be believed by us, which are as little understood as this Doctrine. Our Knowledge at the best, concerning Finite Things, is very imperfect, which is so generally acknowledged by all Men of Wisdom and Experience, that it is esteemed a great point of Wisdom for a Man to be truly sensible of his own ignorance; and it is the Character, which *Solomon* himself giveth of the Fool, that he *rageth, and is confident*, Prov. xiv. 16. But when we consider things Infinite, we are much more at a loss. That there must of necessity be something Eternal, must be acknowledged by all, who understand what is meant by the word; even those that are so *foolish*, as to say in their hearts, *there is no God*, yet must believe something else to be Eternal; they must believe that there always was something, because, if ever there had been nothing, there never could have been any thing. For, how could any thing have been produced by nothing? Out of nothing it might, but then there must have been something to produce it. We can be certain therefore of nothing, if we are not sure of this, that there is something Eternal; the Atheist himself cannot deny it, unless he be so stupid as not to know what it means. And yet what apparent contradictions may he fancy to himself in the Notion of Eternity? For what is Eternal can never be capable of either a shorter or a longer Duration

^c Εἰς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ, εἰς κύριος, ὁ μονογενὴς αὐτῷ υἱός, ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τὸ ἅγιον ὁ παρακλητής. Καὶ αὐταρχες ἡμῖν εἶδέναι ταῦτα· φύσιν δὲ, ἣ ὑπόστασιν μὴ πολυπραγμόνει, εἰ γὰρ ἦν γεγενημένον, ἐλέγομεν· ὁ γέγραπται, καὶ τολμήσομεν. αὐταρχες ἡμῖν εἶδέναι πρὸς σατηράν, ὅτι εἰς πατὴρ, καὶ υἱός, καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. Cyrill. Hieros. Catech. xvi.

than it always had ; so that Millions of Ages hence it will not have continued longer, than it had done as many Millions of Ages past. And how strange and contradictory doth this seem to be, that not only three Ages and one Age should be the same, but that there should be no difference between one Hour or Moment, and never so many Ages in respect of Eternity? And there is no avoiding this difficulty, if a Man be of any Religion, or no Religion: let him but apprehend what is meant by Eternity, and he must own both that there is such a thing, and that he is utterly unable to explain it. Here then is an unanswerable Difficulty in a thing which all the World must believe, if they have it but so proposed to them, as to be made understand what it is. And there is no difficulty imaginable in the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, which can be pretended to be greater, than that which is inseparable from this Notion, which all must of necessity hold.

And if we do but observe it in Finite Things, which are usual and familiar to us, and the Objects of our Senses every day, we believe what we very little understand, or are capable of understanding. Our Knowledge indeed is so very imperfect concerning the Nature of most things, that I may almost venture to say, that if we will but be contented for the present to believe what God has delivered concerning his own Nature, we may hereafter know God himself as plainly as now we know many things here. *For now we see through a Glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.*

If it be thought unreasonable however, that such abstruse Mysteries should be made necessary to Salvation, and that we should pronounce that *whosoever will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity*, and that all who do not thus think and believe, shall *without doubt perish everlastingly.*

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Let it be considered, that in all Religions, whether Natural or Revealed, there must be something believed, which is above all humane Comprehension, and which can be known no farther than in order to be believed; there can be no Faith without all Knowledge; but Knowledge, if it were compleat, would exclude Faith, which is *the Evidence of things not seen*. Knowledge may be considered, either as it is *general* and imperfect, or as it is *particular* and adequate to the Nature of the Thing known: We must have a general Knowledge of whatever is the Object of Faith, but if we had a particular and adequate knowledge of it, there could remain nothing of it unknown, to be the Object of Faith. The difference between Science and Faith is, not that we are less certain of the Objects of Faith, than of the Objects of Science, but that we know less of them. For Certainty depends upon our *general* Knowledge, as that God is true; and therefore what he has revealed, is as certain, as if we saw it, or could demonstrate it in every particular. And this *general* Knowledge, which is necessary in order to Faith, is, in Natural Religion, attained to by Reason, and in Revealed Religion, from Revelation. Thus we attain to such a *general* Knowledge of the Divine Nature by Rational Evidence, as to be convinced, that Infinite Power, and Goodness, and Truth, and all manner of Infinite Perfections belong to it; but we believe the Divine Perfections without any particular comprehensive Knowledge of them; in like manner, from Revelation we attain to this *general* Knowledge, that the Divine Nature consists of Three Persons in One undivided Essence, but we believe these Three Persons to be One God, without any particular and comprehensive Knowledge of so great a Mystery; for then it would no longer be a Mystery, and Faith would be no more Faith.

I would therefore ask the Adversaries of this Doctrine, whether the Belief of a God, Omnipresent, Eter-

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Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, infinitely Holy, Just, and Merciful, be not necessary to Salvation. No rational Man can deny it. I enquire farther, whether Infants and Idiots are obliged necessarily under pain of Damnation to this Belief. They must certainly answer, no; because none can be obliged to Impossibilities. I demand then again, whether, if one or more of these Attributes, or the Agreement of them one with another, be impossible to be understood (with a *general* and imperfect Knowledge) by any who are capable of knowing and believing the rest; the Ignorance of these Articles, which are above their Understandings (even as to this *general* and imperfect way of Knowledge,) can be destructive of their Salvation? They must needs say it cannot, because God can require nothing impossible of any Man. And the very same Answers applied to the Cavils against the *Athanasian Creed*, will be sufficient to silence them. That Creed contains such Truths as are necessary to be believed in order to Salvation, but necessary to particular Persons so far only, as they are capable of knowing them, in order to believing them. *He that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity*; but this supposes him capable of thinking thus; for it is ever supposed and agreed in all Cases, that no Man is bound to any thing impossible; and that God requires nothing of any Man either in Faith or Practice beyond his Power and Capacity. *Whosoever will be saved; before all things it is necessary, that he hold the Catholick Faith; which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.* But this supposes that he has already attain'd, or is able to attain to the Knowledge which is necessary to Faith, for no Man can hold that Faith, the *general* Knowledge whereof he cannot attain. We must with an implicit Faith believe all that God says to be true, though it be never so much above our Understanding; but no Man is bound to believe explicitly any more

than he can understand so far, as is necessary to such a Belief. He is able to understand so much of it, as to know in general what he is requir'd to believe, tho' he can have no such complete and comprehensive Notion of it, as to give a particular and full Account of the Nature and Manner of Existence of that which is to be believ'd by him.

And let the Articles of Faith supposed necessary to Salvation according to Natural Religion be never so few and plain, yet there will still be some Men, who are incapable of understanding them in any way or measure; and then there will lie the same Objections against those Articles of Natural Religion, which are upon this account urged against their Faith in the Trinity it self; which, so far as it is required to be known and believ'd, is not above the Capacity of the Generality of Mankind; and no more is required to be believ'd explicitly of any, than they are capable of knowing in such a degree, as is necessary in order to such a Belief; whatever Articles of Faith be assign'd in Natural or Reveal'd Religion, they will be above the Capacity of many Adult Persons, and of all Infants, to apprehend them; who therefore according to all Religions may be saved without the actual Knowledge of those Articles which are never so necessary to others. And what may be objected against all Religions, Natural as well as Reveal'd, ought in Reason to be objected against none; for there can be no force in it.

III. This Doctrine exceedingly tends to the Advancement of Virtue and Holiness, and has a great Influence upon the Lives and Conversations of Men.

That God the Father should send his Son, his only begotten, and only beloved Son, to be born and to die for us, is an endearing and amazing Act of the Divine Goodness. The Death not of a meer Man, but of the Son of God blessed for ever, in our stead, must needs heighten our Love of God, and our Faith

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and Dependence on him; our Hatred of Sin; and our Assurance of Pardon upon Repentance. This I have prov'd at large in discoursing of the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God for us, and therefore shall not insist upon it here.

In like manner, whatever the Holy Ghost hath done, and is continually doing for us, must needs be of more weight with us, and give us quite another Notion and Apprehension of his Goodness and our own Duty, than we could have had, if we believ'd him to be a Creature. For unless we believe him to be God, we cannot have that devout Love and Faith, and Dependence upon him, which we ought, we cannot have that Esteem and Reverence for his Communion and Presence, which is required of us, nor that Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, whereby we resist, and grieve and do despight to him. That Argument of St. Paul, *What? know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?* and many other to the like purpose, would be lost, but on Supposition, that the Holy Ghost is God. We can never have that Sense which it behoves us to have of our Sins committed in Opposition to the Gifts and Influences of his Grace, without an Acknowledgment of his Godhead. So that our Faith, and Hope, and Fear, and Love, is more excited and enlarged, and all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls are more disposed to the Obedience of the Gospel, through the Belief of this Doctrine of the Trinity, than they could be without it. And therefore as there is nothing absurd, or impossible to be believ'd in this Doctrine, so it was very reasonable and expedient that it should be reveal'd, and should be required to be believ'd.

C H A P. XXVII.

Of the Resurrection of the Dead.

THE *Resurrection* of our Saviour from the Dead, was that which the Apostles chiefly insisted upon in all their Discourses: For if once they could convince Men, that Christ was risen from the Dead, they could not fail of persuading them into a Belief of all that they taught besides. There was no other Part of their Doctrine which could seem more strange and incredible than this; and when that, which they could with so much difficulty be brought to believe, and which could not come to pass but by the Almighty Power of God himself, was evidently and undeniably prov'd to them; this must give that Credit and Authority to all their other Doctrine, that it could be no longer withstood or gainsay'd. This therefore is the Point which the Apostles most of all urged, knowing that if they could gain this, all the rest would follow of course, and that every Man must of necessity be converted to the Belief of the whole Gospel of Christ, who was once convinced of his Resurrection.

And St. Paul, in his Defence before King Agrippa, puts the Question, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the Dead?* Acts xxvi. 8. which implies, that it is a very unreasonable thing to think, that God cannot raise the Dead, and that therefore there was all the Reason in the World to believe that he had rais'd Christ. For there was so great Evidence of his Resurrection, and so many Men daily witness'd it at the peril of their Lives, that if their Adversaries would but allow the thing to be possible, there could be no Doubt remaining, but that Christ was indeed rais'd from the Dead.

The Apostle argues, that it is a very absurd thing to say, that God cannot raise the Dead. What Reason could any Man give why God cannot do it? Or how durst any Man so limit and confine the Infinite Power of God by his own Notions and Conceptions of things, as to say that the Resurrection of the Dead cannot be effected by him? This is unreasonable and absurd in the highest degree, and therefore it is manifest that Christ is risen, and that there is to be a general Resurrection of the Dead, since there is no other Objection that can lie against it, but the Impossibility of the thing it self. For our Resurrection is asserted in the Scriptures, as a necessary Consequence of Christ's Resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 20. and his Resurrection was so well attested, that the greatest Enemies to Christianity could not deny the Evidence of the Fact, supposing the thing possible; but they would not own it possible, that such a thing should be, and upon that account rejected all the Evidence that could be produced, as tending only to prove an Impossibility, and so not to be regarded. I shall therefore shew the Possibility of the Resurrection of the Dead, and that it is unreasonable to think it incredible that God should raise the Dead.

If it be incredible, that God should raise the Dead, it must be upon one of these two accounts; either because he cannot, or because he will not do it. For what God both can and will do, is so far from being Incredible, that it is a most Undoubted Truth. Therefore I shall

First, Prove that God is certainly able to raise the Dead; and,

Secondly, That he certainly will do it.

I. That God is certainly able to raise the Dead, is a thing credible in it self, and therefore ought to be esteem'd incredible by no sort of Men whatsoever, tho' they have no Knowledge of any Reveal'd Religion, if they have but right Apprehensions concerning

God. No Man can have a true Notion of God, but he must know that God is a Being of Infinite Power and Wisdom; that he made the World and all things therein; that he preserves and sustains all Creatures, and that all things are wholly at his Will and Disposal, to do with them as he pleases; that nothing can oppose or resist his Will, or give him the least Hindrance in any thing which he is pleas'd to undertake. How then can it seem incredible that God should raise a Dead Man to Life again, when he at first gave him his Life? And is it not as easy to restore it to him, as to give it him at first? Might we not as well dispute that it is impossible for a Man to be born, as that it is impossible for him to be rais'd from the Dead, if our own Experience did not convince us of that, but not of this? God, who gave all that Power and Ability, which Natural Causes have to produce their Effects, may, if he pleases, produce the same Effects immediately by himself. For it is not because he stands in need of any help from Natural Causes, that he has appointed them, but because it seem'd best to his Infinite Wisdom to appoint this Course and Order in the World.

And it is evident even to Natural Reason, that there must have been some who were immediately created by God, and were not born of others, as Men are since, that there must have been some *First Parents*, some, who had no Parents themselves, but were of God's immediate Creation, that there must have been some who were the First of all Mankind, and therefore could be born of no others. Since then Man must of necessity have been first form'd by God himself, and not have come by a Natural Birth into the World; it is evident, that God might have made as many Men and Women after this manner as he had pleas'd; and he, who is the Author of our Nature, may act without it, and as much beyond and above any Natural Powers and Faculties in his Creatures, as it seems best to

to him. And it may as well be thought incredible, that God should at first make Man, as that he should be able to raise him up again after Death; for Death is only the End of Nature's Power of working, not of the Power of God himself; who, as he originally made the Race of Mankind, so he appointed the Nature of Things, and gave it a stinted Power, which it cannot exceed; but his own Power is Infinite, and no Bounds can be set to it.

When a Man is once dead, Nature has done with him, and can never recover him to Life again; for God ordain'd at first, that according to the Course of Nature he should only be born, and live here a while; not that his Life should be restored again to him after Death. But he is not so confined himself, that he cannot give Life to the Dead, but has reserv'd this as his own Prerogative, and above any thing in Nature's Power. God, who form'd *Adam* of the Dust of the Ground, might have form'd all Mankind so, if he had pleas'd; and he can as easily raise all Mankind to Life again out of the Dust, as he made the first Man out of it.

The Atheist, one would think, has of all Men the least pretence to scruple the Resurrection of the Dead, who must suppose that Mankind at first sprung out of the Earth as Plants do, by a Spontaneous Production; and for him to pretend that the Bodies of Men cannot be rais'd to Life again by an Almighty Power, is as unreasonable, as any thing in Atheism it self can be.

When at certain Seasons every Year, we see things receive a New Life, as it were, according to the Course of Nature, we may well conclude, that if so strange an Alteration can proceed from Natural Causes, then surely God is able to effect that which is much more wonderful, and to raise even these Bodies of ours after they are dead and rotten in the Grave, to Life again. And since the Corn which is sown in

the Earth, *is not quickened except it die*, and will not revive and grow again and come to Perfection, unless it be first bury'd in the Ground, and undergo great Alterations there; it is a foolish thing, as the Apostle argues, to doubt of the Resurrection of the Dead, because we cannot understand the way and manner of it. Let Men answer all the Difficulties in Nature, and it will be time enough afterwards to dispute with them about a Resurrection; but when we are at a loss about the most common and obvious things, it must be great Presumption to deny the Resurrection, because we cannot comprehend it; when alas! what is there besides that we are able to comprehend? Will we presume to say that God can do nothing, but what we understand how it may be done; when every thing we see, may inform us that his Wisdom is Infinite, and *his ways past finding out*? Indeed, if we understood every thing else, there might be some pretence to scruple the Resurrection, because we do not understand how it shall be. But when our Ignorance is so notorious in all other things, it is the Heighth of Folly and Perverseness, to think our selves competent Judges of such a Mystery as this. So far are we from being able to make any Estimate of God's Power, and so far is the Resurrection from being Incredible, because there may be Objections made about it, which may seem unanswerable; that if no other Answer could be given, this would be sufficient, that God can do more than we can have the least Thought or Conception of; and that it is no Argument that he cannot do what we cannot conceive how it should be done. So long as there is nothing contrary to the Divine Nature in it, nor which implies a Contradiction, the Doctrine of the Resurrection would be very credible and certain too, whatever other Objections might be urged against it; which yet are not in themselves so formidable as they may be imagined to be.

All the Objections against the Resurrection of the Dead are either against the Resurrection of Bodies after their Corruption and Dissolution, or against the Resurrection of the same Bodies of Men which they had before their Death, because the Parts of our Bodies are in a perpetual Change and Flux here, and after Death by several Accidents, as by the devouring of Humane Bodies by Men, or by Fish, or other Creatures, which are afterwards eaten by Men, it may come to pass that the same Parts which compounded one Man's Body, shall afterwards belong to another's, and yet in the Resurrection they can belong but to one of these Bodies, But,

1. Bodies after their Corruption and the Dissolution of the Parts which compose them may be restored to Life by the Re-union of these Parts again. We have several Instances of this in Natural Philosophy, that Bodies divided into never so minute Parts, tho' these Parts be mix'd and confounded with the Parts of other Bodies, may, by Chymical Operations, be reduced to their former State and Condition, and which is of nearer affinity to the Subject in hand, after the Ashes of a Plant have been sown in a Garden, fairer and larger Plants have sprung up than had been known of that kind in the place where the Experiment was made. And ^aMr. Boyle thinks it scarce to be imagined what Expedients to reproduce Bodies, a farther Discovery of the Mysteries of Art and Nature, may lead us Mortals to. And much less, says he, can our dim and narrow Knowledge determine what means, even Physical ones, the most wise Author of Nature, and absolute Governour of the World, is able to employ to bring the Resurrection to pass. And where the Powers of Nature fail, we know that God is Infinite, and can want no means to effect whatever he pleases.

^a Mr. Boyle's Consideration about the Possibility of the Resurrection.

2. We may rise with the same Bodies which we have here, notwithstanding any Change or Flux of the Parts of our Bodies while we live, or any Accidents after Death. It is agreeable to Reason, and to the Observations of Philosophers and Physicians, to believe that the Bones and Muscles, the Tendons and Nerves, and all the *Essential constituent Parts* of humane Bodies, are of so firm and solid a Substance, as to suffer little Alteration during our Lives, when once they are come to their full growth and proportion, but to continue the same till we die; and the Alterations which they undergo, before Men come to their full stature, is by addition of Parts, not by the diminution of those wherewith we are born. It appears from a late Discourse of a ^b Learned Physician, that Nutrition is a supply of the Fluid Parts, and that the proper Substance of the Solid Parts suffers no Diminution, but in some extraordinary Cases, and therefore can stand in no need of Reparation but in such a Case. For *the whole Body is Vascular*, or made up of Vessels and Pipes replenished with their several Substances; so that in an *Atrophy* the Fibres become dry, and the Nerves and Vessels are contracted, and shrunk, for want of the Spirits, and Juices, and Liquors, which before filled and distended them. But the Solid Parts are of so durable a Substance, that they can suffer no Diminution, but by such Corrosives to dissolve them, as must produce Ulcers, and such as would affect the Fibres with so intolerable Pains, that *the Torments of the Stone and Gout would be moderate and easie to them; which, in a Consumption, would be Universal* in all Parts of the Body; whereas there is no such Symptom in any Part; and in the greatest Consumptions, the Bones are found to retain their entire Bigness; tho' a piece of Bone is sooner dissolved by a Corrosive Liquor, such as *Aqua-Fortis*, than Muscular Fibres of equal quantity or weight.

^b Dr. Haver's Osteolog. second Discourse of Accretion, and Nutrition.

It is wont to be observ'd upon this Subject, that when the Change of Parts is gradual, and in the course of some Years the Body may still be the same, as it could not be, if the Change were made all at once. A Ship or House remains the same, tho' it be never so often repaired, and tho' the Materials in Succession of Time be all or most of them renewed: whereas, if it should be taken to pieces all at once, and all the Materials should be changed, and new Materials of the same Figure and Dimensions should be exactly in the same manner framed and built up together in their stead, these would make another House or Ship, and not the same that was before.

But when the Parts which *constitute* the Humane Body, and give it the Denomination of the Body of this or that individual Man continue the same, the same Person has the same Body in his Old Age, that he had in his Youth, as truly as he has the same Body in Sicknes, which he had in Health; and the same under the Languishings of a Consumption, which he had in his greatest Vigour and Strength. For the Change is only in the variable and accidental Parts, which are not *necessary* to *constitute* the Body of such a Man; and the *necessary constituent Parts* (tho' they were changed or altered, as in some very rare cases they may be) being so few in Comparison of the rest, which make up the Bulk of a Man's Body, can hardly be supposed by the devouring of Canibals, or by any other Accident to become the *constituent Parts* of any other Man's Body. ^c *Sanctorius*, from his Statick Experiments, has observed, that a very inconsiderable part of what we eat, is turned to Nourishment; and from the small proportion which the *Necessary constituent Parts* bear to the rest, and the unsitness of them, as of Bones, &c.

^c *Sanctorius. De statica Medicina, Sect. i. Aph. vi, lix, lx. Sect. III.*

to nourish, it may be concluded, that little or nothing of that which turns to Nourishment, can be supposed to be of those *constituent Parts*; and considering farther the great Changes which happen in our Bodies in the continual Flux of Parts, and the small Proportion again, which the *constituent*, or *necessary essential Parts* have to the rest, we may conclude, (supposing those Parts as well as others to suffer Alteration) that it is the greatest odds, that the *constituent Parts* which turn to Nourishment, do not by that Nourishment happen to belong to the *constituent Parts* of the Man's Body, who is nourished by them when he comes to die. So that if a Man should live wholly upon Humane Flesh, which it is not to be believ'd that ever any Man did, yet it would perhaps be above an Hundred to one, whether any *constituent Part* of his Body were made up when he died, of the *constituent Parts* of any other Man's Body. And besides, it must be granted by all, that believe a God and a Providence, that a particular Providence may take such effectual care of us, as to reserve to every Man his own Body in all the *Essential Parts* of it; the *Hairs of our Heads* are all numbred; that is, they are as well known to God, as they could be to us, if we had told and numbred them never so exactly; and therefore much more the *necessary Parts* of us are under his Cognizance and Care.

These *necessary constituent Parts* then being the same, God may supply the rest, as he shall see fitting; and the Body will be the same after the Resurrection, that it was in this Life, tho' the Bodies of Men at the Resurrection must arise in all the Perfection of an Humane Body, and therefore must have no part wanting: For if any part of an Humane Body should be wanting, they would not have all the perfection of such a Body, tho' they should be never so perfect in all the Parts which they be supposed to have. For if a Man having but one Eye, or one Ear, should be able to see or hear with that one better than ever any Man did

did with two, yet it would still be a defect in his Body to want an Eye, or an Ear.

All the uses of any one part of our Bodies are not perhaps yet fully known, and the Dependence which one part has upon another may be such, as that it may be requisite that those Parts should be raised for their relative usefulness, which may seem to have no proper use of their own after the Resurrection. The Sight is a Sense which may be capable of Improvements beyond what we now are able to conceive, as we may conclude from the Improvements which have been made by the help of Microscopes and Telescopes. And who knows, but that in the Glorified State our Eyes shall have that Perfection, as to be able to discern the Contexture and Motions, and the whole Frame of those Pure, Spiritual and Cœlestial Bodies, and then those Parts, which now to the naked view, and much more, when discerned thro' Microscopes, cause so much Admiration, will be still much more admirable to behold, when they are thoroughly seen and fully understood by us; and to want those Parts which may seem to be then no longer of any use, would be to want one great Argument of our Praise of God in the contemplation of his Wonderful Works.

But this is mentioned only to shew that an ordinary Fancy, if it be allowed to take the Liberty which some have done upon this Subject, might easily propose as probable Reasons in Defence of the Received Doctrines, as can be framed against them. The ^d Author of the *Answers to the Orthodox* amongst the Works of *Justin Martyr*, says, that some Parts of our Bodies, tho' they will then have no direct usefulness, yet will be raised at the last Day, to be Memorials to us of the Wisdom of God in that use which we had of them in this Life. And ^e *St. Austin* says, that the Glory of

^d Quæst. 53.

^e Aug. *Civit. Dei*, lib. xxii. c. 17.

God will be magnified, in that he will have freed those Members from the Corruption to which they were subject here. However, it ought to suffice Christians that our Bodies shall be like to Christ's Body, and therefore shall have the full perfection and proportion of all the Parts constituting an Humane Body, as his Body had after his Resurrection. *We know that we shall be like him*, 1 John iii. 2. and as for any thing farther, it will be time enough to know it at the Resurrection.

II. It is not only credible and reasonable to believe that God can, but likewise that he will raise the Dead. The Revelation of his Will in his Holy Word, ought to put this beyond Dispute among Christians. But besides, it appears to be requisite from the Nature of Man, consisting of Soul and Body, that there should be a Resurrection of the Body; it is fit that the Man should be punished that sinned, and that the Man who lived well here, and suffered for Righteousness sake, should be rewarded for it. But if the Soul only be punished, or the Soul only be rewarded, the Man is not rewarded or punished; for the Soul is but part of the Man, but Soul and Body together make up the whole Man, and therefore it is requisite that the Soul and Body should be re-united. *For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. For this Reason it is requisite, that the Soul should be again united to the same Body; otherwise the Soul and Body would constitute a Man, but not the same Man that was before, the Body not being the same; for it must be the same Soul and the same Body that make the same Man. *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. the same Body therefore that died in Adam is to be made alive in Christ; *who shall change, or* ^f *transform our vile*

^f Μετασχηματισμός.

Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, Philip. iii. 21. Christ himself rose with the same Body that was Crucified, and we are to be like him at the Resurrection, and to have our Bodies changed into the likeness of his Glorious Body. When we read, that at the Resurrection, *All that are in the Graves, shall hear the Voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth*, John v. 28, 29. and that the Sea will give up the Dead which were in it, Rev. xx. 13. How is it possible to understand this of any thing, but of the same Bodies which died? And indeed, if a New Body were assumed, how could it be a Resurrection? Which implies the Rising again of that Body, which, after the Separation of the Soul, was buried in the Grave; and otherwise, as it is usually argued, one Body may be punished for the Sins committed in another.

If it be said, that the Body is only the Instrument of Sensation to the Soul, but is it self capable of none, and therefore must be incapable of Rewards or Punishments. It may perhaps be Answered, that this is more than can be absolutely concluded from the Notions of Modern Philosophy against the general Sense of Mankind, and the Philosophy of all former Ages. However, the Body being unable to determine it self in its Sensations, if it have any of its own; I confess, I cannot think this Argument fit to be insisted upon, in as much as no Actions can be capable of Rewards or Punishments, but such as proceed from Choice.

But it must be acknowledged, that the Soul may be capable of more Happiness or Misery, when re-united to the Body, than in its separate state. For besides the Anguish, or the Peace and Joy of Mind, besides its own Reflections, and its proper Operations, which the Soul is capable of in a state of Separation from the Body; it is capable of being affected with Sensations,

tions, which arise from its Union with the Body. And that these may be answerable to what a Man's Actions in this Life have been, the Soul must be united to the self-same Body, so disposed and qualified to affect the Soul as it was in this Life, only with infinitely greater, more exquisite and more lasting degrees of Pain, or of Joy and Satisfaction; yet without any mixture of gross and sensual Pleasures in the Righteous, but only such as are suitable to spiritual Bodies. And this disposition of Body depends upon the vertuous or vicious Actions and Habits of Men here; for a Body, by vicious Practices and Customs, prone to raging and furious Passions, insatiable Appetites, and tormenting Inclinations and Desires, (without any thing to gratifie or assuage them) must have quite another effect upon a Soul, than a Body subdued to the mild, and calm, and obedient Temper of Religion and Vertue. And tho' God could by his Almighty Power form another Body to that Frame and Disposition, which the Body of any particular Man was in, when his Soul departed out of it; yet it doth not seem agreeable to the Divine Goodness and Purity, by his immediate Power, to frame a New Body to the depraved Temper and Inclinations of a vicious Man. The Soul seems to have a natural Aptitude and Tendency implanted in it, to a Union with its own Body: from whence else proceeds that great Reluctancy to a Separation from it? And we are so little acquainted with the Union of the Soul and Body, that for ought we know, a Soul can be united only to its proper Body. The Truth is, we know nothing of these Matters, but from the Scriptures; all besides is only Conjecture. But the Doctrine of the Scriptures is probable even to our Reason, tho' indeed it ought to over-rule Reason, especially in things which are so obscure, and so little understood by us. God has declared, that he will raise these Bodies to Life again at the Day of Judgment; and whatever we may think

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C H A P. XXVIII.

Of the Reasons why Christ did not shew himself to all the People of the Jews after his Resurrection.

ST. Peter speaking of Christ's Resurrection, says. *Him God raised up the third Day, and shewed him openly, not to all the People, but unto Witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the Dead, Acts x. 40, 41.* After his Resurrection he was shewn openly, but not to all the People; he was seen in a plain and open manner, yet not so publickly, as to make all the People witnesses of his Resurrection. The Will and good Pleasure of God is a sufficient Reason to us of all his Actions, especially in Acts of Mercy: For it would be a strange Return made but to a *Man* for any Favour received, to be captious and quarrelsome about the manner of his bestowing it, instead of being grateful to him for it. But besides this general Reason, which ought to be of force with us in all cases, there are Reasons peculiar to the present case, whereby we may be able to give an account of it, even according to our own apprehensions of things.

I. There are Reasons peculiar to this Dispensation of Christ's Resurrection; why Christ should not shew himself to all the People, after he was risen from the Dead.

II. It had not been suitable to the other Dispensations of God towards Mankind for him to do it.

III. Great Numbers of the *Jews* were given over to hardness of Heart, and would not have believed, tho' they had seen Christ after his Resurrection.

IV. If they had believed, their Conversion had not been a greater proof of the Truth of his Resurrection, than their Unbelief has been.

V. The Power of his Resurrection manifested in the Miraculous Gifts bestowed upon the Apostles, was as great a Proof of his Resurrection, as the Personal Appearance of our Saviour himself could have been.

I. There are Reasons peculiar to this Dispensation of his Resurrection, why Christ should not shew himself to all the People after he was risen from the Dead. Christ, after his Resurrection, was to act according to the Majesty of the Divine Nature, not according to the Infirmities and Condescension of the Humane; the time of his conversing with Men was at an end at his Death, and then another method and manner of Dispensation was to begin; he was then to converse only with his particular Friends and Favourites, to satisfy them of his Resurrection, and to instruct and enable them both by their Doctrine and Miracles to satisfy others. It could not be suitable to the Dignity of his Majesty, which he had assumed after his Resurrection, to submit himself to the Censures of his Enemies; he had suffered enough from them already in the state of his Humiliation, and must he never be above the Suspicion and Scrutiny of their Malice? Shall not his Resurrection free him from it? When they saw him hanging upon the Cross, they cry'd out with upbraiding and insolent Scorn, that they would believe in him, if he would come down from thence; but neither did they deserve such a Miracle to be wrought at their Pleasure, who thus call'd for it, nor was it suitable to the Divine Dispensation, that it should be wrought. It was neither fitting that he should save himself from Death, nor that he should appear

appear to them after he was risen from the Dead. He was to die for our Redemption, and as we had wanted the Argument from his Resurrection for the Truth of our Religion, if he had come down from the Cross; so, if he had appear'd to all the *Jews*, we had wanted other Evidence; which, as I shall shew, at least amounts to all the Proof which that could have given.

In the state of his Humiliation, our Saviour was pleas'd to suffer himself to be exposed to *the contradiction of Sinners*, and to all their Affronts and Injuries; but when *this their Hour and the Power of Darknes* was once past, they were to see him no more, but with Confusion of Face, and Terrour of Mind; yet his Mercy was still the same towards them; one of the greatest Persecutors was converted by a Voice from Heaven, the Son of Man speaking to him from thence, that he might be the happy Instrument in the Conversion of others, and a *Pattern* to them of the *long-suffering* of Christ, *1 Tim. i. 16.* But his Manifestation of himself to *St. Paul* at his Conversion, was with dreadful Awe and Majesty, not in that mild and gracious Glory, in which he was seen by *St. Stephen*; and it is reserv'd for those who persecuted and *pierced him*, to look upon him with Consternation and Anguish at the Last Day, *Rev. i. 7.*

II. It had not been suitable to the other Dispensations of God towards Mankind for Christ to be shewn openly to all the People. God might work such astonishing Miracles, and strike such Terrours into the Minds of Men, as to make it impossible for any one to doubt of his Existence, or of the Truth of his Word; but he doth not all which he can do, but what he in his Wisdom sees fit to be done; he doth not use all the Means which some Men may conceit he might use, but leaves Men without excuse, and then requires their Faith and Obedience at their peril. To imagine that Christ should have appear'd promiscu-

ously unto all, is as unreasonable, as to suppose that God should communicate himself to all alike, or that he should have spoken from Heaven to Men without the Message and Ministry of his Prophets. For when Christ was risen from the Dead, he was no longer to act like a Mortal Man, but as in his Glorify'd State, as our Lord and King, and as God in our Humane Nature, now no longer subject to any of its Imperfections; and therefore he was no more to come himself to the People, as he had done in the state of his Humiliation, but to send his Apostles and Disciples among them, as he had before his Incarnation sent the Prophets.

III. Great Numbers of the *Jews* were given up to Hardness of Heart, and would not have believ'd, tho' they had seen Christ after his Resurrection. Those, who when they had seen our Saviour's Miracles, had vilify'd them, and blasphem'd the Holy Ghost, by whom they were wrought, had their Hearts hardned, that *seeing they might see and not perceive, and be converted.* And of this number the Chief-Priests and Elders must be suppos'd to be, who hired the Soldiers to contradict and stifle the Belief of his Resurrection with a false Story of their own Invention. The Chief-Priests before had consulted to put *Lazarus* to Death, when he was undeniably known to have been rais'd from the Grave, *John xii. 10.* So far were they from being brought to a Belief in Christ by the Sight of *Lazarus*, that they fully verify'd that Saying, that there are some, who *will not believe, though one rose from the Dead.* *Lazarus* was shewn openly to all the People, and ^a liv'd among them for many Years after he had been restored to Life again, when he had been Dead four Days; and they would not believe, tho' they saw and convers'd with him, but were the more enraged at it; Christ himself therefore, after his Re-

^a Epiphani. Hær. 66. n. 34.

urrection, did not vouchsafe them his Presence, but used other Means which were more proper; one whereof was this, that the *Graves were open'd, and many bodies of Saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy City and appeared unto many, Matth. xxvii. 33.*

IV. If the *Jews* had believ'd in Christ, their Conversion had not been a greater Proof of the Truth of his Resurrection, than their Unbelief has been. Their Stubbornness and Hardness of Heart was foretold by the Prophets, with their Dispersion, and the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and the Propagation of the Gospel (according to the Prediction likewise of the Prophets) in so miraculous a manner, not only at a distance, but in *Judea*, and in *Jerusalem* it self, notwithstanding all the Opposition which the *Jews* could make, gave as great a Testimony to it, as their Favour and Protection could have done. And therefore it was just with God rather to leave them to the Hardness of their own Hearts, than to use such farther Methods with them, as were unsuitable to the Divine Dispensation in the Mystery of our Redemption, and would either have only hardned them to a greater degree, or at least would not have prov'd more effectual towards the Manifestation of the Truth of the Gospel.

V. The Power of Christ's Resurrection manifested in the miraculous Gifts bestow'd upon the Apostles, was as great a Proof of his Resurrection, as the Personal Appearance of our Saviour himself could have been. Our Saviour shew'd himself to *Witnesses chosen before of God, to be Witnesses of all things which he did, both in the Land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem, Acts x. 39, 41.* these Men knew his Life and Doctrine, they had been instructed by him, and had forsaken all for him, and according to his Promise were *endued with Power from on high*, to enable them to testify to the whole World, that they had not only seen him, but had often convers'd with him after he rose from the

Dead. And one of their chief Qualifications was, that they were but a few poor and ignorant Men, without Force or Policy, without any Art or Contrivance; they could tell a plain Truth, but could neither feign nor dissemble; if they had been more in number, the Conversion of the World had been so much the less miraculous; and they were not chosen out of the Scribes and Elders, who had been used to Artifices and Falshood, but had them all along their Enemies, and opposed to their Craft and Power an honest Simplicity of Mind, that neither knew what belong'd to Deceit, nor fear'd any in so good a Cause; nor were they in the least discourag'd to see their own and all other Nations against them. *God had chosen the Foolish things of the World to confound the Wise; and God had chosen the Weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty,* 1 Cor. i. 27.

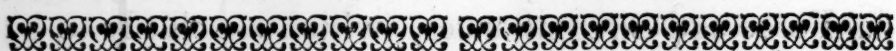
These Men, under all Necessities, and Persecutions, and Dangers, and Torments, both Living and Dying, witness'd that they had seen Christ alive after he had been crucify'd; and tho' they were but very few in comparison of their Enemies, yet consider'd as Witnesses, they were many, for *he was seen by above five hundred at once*, which is a vast number in any matter of Evidence; and if so many Men be not a sufficient Testimony, no number of Men could have been. That which is demonstrated but in one way, is as certain as if it were demonstrable in never so many Methods; and he who sees a thing plainly with his two Eyes, may be as sure of it, as if he had never so many Eyes to see it withal. *It is written in the Law of Moses, that the Testimony of two Men is true, or credible, and to be rely'd upon for Truth,* John viii. 17. and it is the Law and Practice of all Nations to content themselves with a small number of sufficient Witnesses in proof of the most important Affairs. And if these *Witnesses chosen before of God* spoke, and acted, and suffer'd, as no Men would or could have done, if they

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they had not been well assured of what they testify'd, and assisted from above in preaching the Gospel; the Truth of the Resurrection of Christ is as infallibly deliver'd to us by their Testimony, as it could have been by the Testimony of never so many more: For all that never so many others could have done, would have been but the same thing over again, which these Men certify'd by *many infallible Proofs*; and what is once infallibly prov'd, is as certain, as if all the World should agree in declaring it. It is not the Number of Witnesses, but the Character and Qualifications of the Persons, and the Evidence it self, in its full Force and Circumstances: which are chiefly to be regarded in Matters of this Nature. If but a few Men can make it sufficiently appear, as the Apostles did, by undeniable Miracles, that what they say is true, and that God himself confirms the Truth of it, they then appeal to every Man's own Senses, before whom they work their Miracles, and make every one that sees them a Witness to the Truth of their Doctrine; God himself bears witness to it, and the *Jews* might have said in this, as they did in a very different Case, *What need we any farther Witnesses? for we our selves have heard of their own mouths, in the miraculous Gift of Tongues, or seen it with our own Eyes, in the many wonderful Works which were continually wrought in the most publick manner, in Testimony of the Resurrection of Christ.*

Our Blessed Saviour therefore gave as full Proof of his Resurrection, as if he had appear'd in the Temple, or in the midst of *Jerusalem*, to the whole People of the *Jews*. For this had not been more effectual to the Conversion of most of them, nor more sufficient to evidence the Truth of the Gospel, than his Appearance to his Disciples was; and if the *Jews* had unanimously believ'd, it could not have contributed more to convince Men of the Truth of the Resurrection, than their Unbelief has done; he sent his Apo-

files with a miraculous Power, as convincing as his own Appearance could have been; and all things consider'd, the *Jews* afford us as full Evidence in behalf of the Gospel, by opposing it, as they could have done by their Compliance with it. And since we have sufficient Testimony to resolve our Faith into the Divine Veracity, the Certainty is the same, whether the Witnesses be more or fewer, because it depends upon the Veracity of God, which is always the same, whatever the means be, by which our Faith is resolv'd into it.



C H A P. XXIX.

Of the Forty Days in which Christ remain'd upon Earth after his Resurrection, and of the manner of his Ascension.

OUR Blessed Saviour had certify'd his Disciples of his Resurrection in such a manner, as to give them *many infallible Proofs* of it, or else it is impossible for any thing to be infallibly proved; and that which is chiefly to be consider'd in this matter is, that he was seen by them not once but often, not for a short time, or at a hasty Interview, but for *forty days* together, and then he perform'd the common Actions of Humane Life, *he did eat and drink with them*, and discours'd with them of the things relating to his Kingdom. *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his Passion by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, Acts i. 3.* That which I here design is, to make some Observations upon the Conversation that our Saviour had with his Disciples, during the Forty days between his Resurrection and his Ascension, and upon the manner of his leaving them, when he ascended into Heaven.

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I. The Scriptures acquaint us that our Saviour was seen of his Disciples Forty Days, or that he vouchsafed them his Presence the greatest part of that time which he remain'd upon Earth after his Resurrection. But in what manner all that time was spent with them, we are nowhere told; which is no Wonder, if we consider how much of his former Life is conceal'd from us.

In the Scriptures, which are written for our Instruction, and in the plainest and sincerest manner in the World to inform us of all things necessary to our Salvation, we have nothing taken notice of for Ostentation nor for Ornament, but many things omitted in the Life of Christ, which are thought needful in Humane Authors, to make up a compleat History. We have no more mention'd of his Parentage than was necessary to make it evident that he was descended from *David*, and born of a Virgin, as the Prophets had foretold of him. When he was born, we read that the Shepherds and the Wise-men came to worship him; that he was circumcis'd, that he was brought to *Jerusalem* to be presented to the Lord, and that he was carry'd into *Ægypt* to avoid *Herod's* Cruelty; and hereby known Prophecies were fulfill'd. Afterwards he was brought to *Nazareth* upon the Death of *Herod*, and from that time we read no more of him, till the Twelfth Year of his Age, when he disputed with the Doctors in the Temple. And then we are told, that he went down to *Nazareth*, and was subject to his Mother, and to *Joseph*; and in general terms, that he *increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in favour with God and Man*; as it was before said of him, that he *grew and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with Wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him*, Luke ii. 40, 52. The next time we read any thing of him, is when he was about Thirty Years of Age, and came to *John* to be Baptized.

Thus

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Thus, not only during his Infancy and Childhood there is little related of our Blessed Saviour, but his riper Years are passed over in silence; in all which time, we may be sure that there was no Speech or Action of so Divine a Person, but what well deserved the observation of all that knew him, and was more worthy of mention in History, than all the renowned Adventures and Exploits, or than the Wise or Witty Sayings which adorn the Lives of the Greatest among the Sons of Men. But Modesty, Humility, and a Contempt of the Praise of Men, were some of the great and useful Doctrines in which he came to instruct Mankind; and he could not do this more effectually than by his own Example, in leading a mean and obscure Life, little known or taken notice of in the World, 'till two or three Years before he was to leave it by a cruel and infamous Death. He did not chuse to spend his time in places of Publick Resort and Converse; and when he disputed in the Temple, yet nothing of the Particulars is mentioned. This obscure and unknown Person was to rebuke and control the Pride and Vanity of the Popular Scribes and Pharisees.

And after he had appeared in the World, very much of his Life was spent in privacy and retirement; not many of his Discourses are delivered down to us, and the greatest part of his Actions are omitted. For if they had been all written and described in their several Circumstances, many Volumes must have been taken up in the Narrative of them; insomuch that St. John supposes, *that even the World it self could not have contained the Books that should have been written*, John xxi. 25. that is, as we might express it in our Language, he did a world of things more than these, which are related of him; and in the same sense of the Word, St. James says, that the Tongue is *a world of Iniquity*, James iii. 6. The meaning of St. John is, that

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that hardly any words could exprefs how many other things were done by our Saviour, besides those which he had set down. Christ might have employed some accurate Historian to compose the Annals of his whole Life with the greatest exactness imaginable; but he was pleased to be represented to the World, very imperfectly, by such as knew nothing of what belonged to the writing History, any farther than to be able to tell the strict and necessary Truth. The Evangelists wrote his Life with the same Humility with which he lived.

And it is observable, that when St. John says, that there were so *many other things which Jesus did*, he speaks with relation to the things done by him after his Resurrection, having just before given an account of what our Saviour had said to St. Peter. And so in the foregoing Chapter, when St. John has declared how our Saviour certified St. Thomas of the Truth of his Resurrection, he adds, *And many other Signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book; but these are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have Life through his Name*, John xx. 30, 31. So that we are acquainted with no more than was necessary, of what pass'd between our Saviour and his Disciples after his Resurrection, the rest concerns us not to know; it was for their instruction and encouragement in their Duty, and they were empower'd to teach and instruct us. We know, that *beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*, Luke xxiv. 27. but we are no where told what were the Particulars of his Exposition; only we are sure, that the Apostles in their Explications of the Old Testament followed the Interpretations which he had given. We read that he was *seen of them forty days, and spoke of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*. From whence we may conclude, that the time between
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the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ, was chiefly spent in comforting and instructing them, and in expounding to them the Scriptures concerning his Passion and Resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost after his Ascension.

St. Paul mentions, that *he was seen by above Five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater part were then still alive to testify the truth of what he said, 1 Cor. xv. 6.* tho' this particular, however remarkable, is omitted by the Evangelists; for they relate things just as they saw it needful upon every occasion, and since they said enough to convince Men, they were not careful to say all that might be said, they were ready to die in testimony of what they delivered, and daily wrought Miracles to confirm it; and therefore were not solicitous to lay together all the Particulars, or to put them into any exact Order and Method; they declared what they knew, and their Miracles proved it, and they depended not upon such Niceties as Humane Proofs have need of.

We may reasonably conclude then, notwithstanding the silence of the Sacred Writers, that when Christ had once fully manifested himself to his Disciples, and satisfied them in his Resurrection, the rest of the time till his Ascension was most of it spent with them in Divine Discourses for their Instruction and Comfort; such as those are which we read in the Evangelists, one of whom declares, that a full account of all that pass'd between him and his Disciples was more than could well be express'd. That happy time was employ'd in pure and spiritual Joys and Contemplations, in forming and preparing them for the Reception of the Holy Ghost.

As soon as *Mary Magdalen* knew our Lord after his Resurrection, she fell at his Feet to worship him, and would touch his sacred Body, *Matth. xxviii. 9. John xx. 17.* For this Reason perhaps too, as well as out of Devotion to him, that she might be able to

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give the Apostles the better account of his being risen again. But he forbad her, saying, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*, and then sends her to his Disciples, to his Brethren, as he with infinite Love and Condescension styles them. He was not yet ascended, ^a or was not then about to ascend, but to stay many Days upon Earth, and there would be time enough for her nearer approaches to him; either for the encrease and confirmation of her Faith, or for her Acknowledgment and Adoration. The Message with which she was now sent, was of great importance, in which no delay was to be used; and in such case *no Man* was to be *saluted by the way*, 2 King. iv. 29. Luk. x. 4. After his Resurrection, Christ made himself known to his Disciples by degrees, and by several Appearances to them at distant times, in divers places, and in different manners; he suffered them to doubt of that great Article of our Faith for a while, that he might overcome their Unbelief, and extort a Conviction from them by such means, as that no Man, unless he would be very unreasonable and obstinate, should pretend any cause to doubt of it afterwards. But when he had thoroughly convinc'd them of his Resurrection, we may conclude from what we read of his conversing with them, that from that time, he ad-

^a Οὐπω ἀναβέβηκα. Enallage temporis. ἰδὲ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τῶν θυγῶν ἔσηκεν, *Judex ante januam assistit*. Jac. v. 9. ὥς ὅτι ἐνέσηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τῇ χειρὶ, *quasi instet dies*, 2 Theff. ii. 2. Ἦλθον γὰρ διχάζουαι ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τὴν παροῦσιν αὐτῷ. Matt. x. 35. Veni separare (separaturus) hominem, &c. — ῥά το γὰρ τίσασθαι ἀλείτην. Hom. Il. 3. v. 28. Cogitabat ulturum se sceleratum, *etsi cum Tu has Literas legeres, putabam fore ut scirem jam, quid Brundusii actum esset*. Cic. ad Att. l. ix. Ep. i. (i. e. cum Tu has Literas lecturus sis, puto fore ut sciam.) Hac autem scribebam Pridie Non. (scribo) tamen angebar—mirabárque, (angor, mirorque) Idem ibid. Brundusio nihil dum erat allatum, Ep. 2. (allatum est) Nos adhuc quid Brundusii actum esset planè nesciebamus, (nescimus) Ib. Sed vereor, ne tibi ἀνυγῶ sim: si enim rectè ambulavit is, qui hanc Epistolam tulit, in ipsum tuum diem incidit. Id. Epist. 3. fin. (si rectè ambulaturus est, qui hanc Epist. est laturus—incidet.)

mitted them to a freer and more intimate Communion with himself, and discoursed with them in the most mild, and gracious, and instructive manner, of all which it concerned them to know pertaining to his Kingdom, or which they were capable then of knowing, before the descent of the Holy Ghost; sometimes perhaps vouchsafing his Presence to one, and sometimes to others of them, and most commonly to them all together, when they were assembled, as we find they generally were. And when he withdrew himself, it was because their mortal state would not bear a constant and uninterrupted Attendance for so long a time upon their Blessed Master; and because it was requisite, that they by degrees should be accustomed to endure his Absence, and to *walk by Faith, not by Sight*; and after his Ascension, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, did not immediately come upon his departure from them, but their Faith was to be exercised in the expectation of him for the space of Ten Days, and then his Promise was to be fulfilled in the fittest and most proper Season, on the Feast of *Pentecost*.

In few words, Christ *was seen of them*, says the Scripture, *forty Days*, which implies, that these, for the most part, were spent in his Presence; and we are in the same place told how this time was employ'd, in *speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*. But when he withdrew himself from his Disciples, he might have such attendance of Saints, and Angels, as he had before in his state of Humiliation, at his Transfiguration, and in the Wilderness.

II. We may observe the manner how our Saviour left his Disciples, when he ascended from them into Heaven. He had before prepared them to expect his Ascension; for besides what he had said to them before his Death, immediately upon his Resurrection he sent this Message to his Disciples by *Mary Magdalen*, *Go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God,*

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and your God, John xx. 17. They were in hopes, it seems, that he would at this time have restored again the Kingdom to Israel, and did not think he would have left them, before that, which they so much desired, had been accomplished. However, taking his leave of them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father, which, says he, ye have heard of me. And whilst he was giving them repeated Assurances that this Promise should be most effectually fulfilled, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their sight; he was not snatch'd away from them by a swift and violent motion, like *Elijah*, and carried up in a fiery Chariot, which might dazle their sight, that they could not discern him in his Ascent, but he was lifted up and removed from them leisurely, and by degrees; they looked stedfastly towards Heaven as he went up, by a visible and easie motion, and they had a clear view of him, 'till at last a Cloud received him out of their sight. It is probable, that all the Disciples to the Number of about an hundred and twenty, mentioned, *Acts* i. 15. were present to behold the Ascent of our Saviour. The ^b Apostle *St. Thaddeus* declared, tho' this (as well as many other things) is not inserted into the Scriptures, that a great multitude of the Saints and Heavenly Host went up with him; we read of the Appearance of two Angels upon this Occasion, who acquainted the Disciples, that this same Jesus, whom they had thus evidently seen, taken up from them into Heaven, should so come in like manner, as they had seen him go into Heaven. And *St. Paul* informs us, that the manner of his coming at the last Day, will be with all his Saints, *1 Thess.* iii. 13. with his mighty Angels, or the Angels of his Power, *2 Thes.* i. 7. *St. Jude*, that he will come with ten thousands of his Saints, *Jude*, ver. 14. and our Saviour himself, that all the holy Angels will attend him,

^b Apud Euseb. Hist. lib. i. c. nlt.

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Matth. xxv. 31. From whence we may conclude, according to the Account of St. *Thaddeus*, that the Holy Angels and Saints visibly attended him in his Ascension.

The Disciples were all much surprized at a thing so wonderful, and *stood gazing up into Heaven* after him, till they were certified not only by their own Senses, but by the Message of the Angels, that he was gone from them into Heaven, no more to be expected from thence, till the Day of Judgment.

We have therefore the plainest and fullest Evidence that can be desired, both of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Saviour. *He shewed himself alive to his Disciples, after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs; he was seen of them forty Days, and conversed and discoursed with them, tho' we are not told after what manner, and by what intervals of time he was pleased to vouchsafe them his Presence; this being concealed from us, as very many of the Particulars are of his former Life before his Crucifixion. But at the end of the space of forty Days, whilst he was in the midst of them, he ascended into Heaven in the sight of them all, in such a manner, that they distinctly saw and beheld him, and kept their Eyes fix'd upon him in his Ascension, and a Vision of Angels besides informed them, that he is to return in the like manner, when he shall come to judge the World.*

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C H A P. XXX.

Why some Works of Nature are more especially ascribed to God; why Means were sometimes used in the working of Miracles; and why Faith was sometimes required of those, upon whom, or before whom Miracles were wrought.

I. **A**LL the Powers of Natural Causes proceeding from God, *that* may justly be ascribed to him, *which* is wrought by them, for he works as truly by Second Causes, as by his own direct and immediate Power, in producing any Effect. The Order and Frame of Nature was originally by his Appointment, and by his Care, and Providence, and Influence, it is upheld; and therefore the Scriptures ascribe the effects of Natural Agents to God as the Author of them; because these can do nothing but by his Support and Influence: and the continuance and preservation of Natural Causes in the production of their Effects for so many Ages in one constant Tenour, is a manifest and wonderful Demonstration of the Divine Power and Wisdom.

But those things may be said, more especially, to be done by God himself, whereby, upon some extraordinary occasion, his Power and his Will are more particularly manifested, or his Promise is fulfilled; for in those things, his Care and Providence is more concerned to bring them to pass; and therefore God may employ a more than ordinary concurrence to sustain and influence the Powers of Nature, that they may not fail in such Cases to produce their Effects according to their usual and settled Course.

II. The Scripture takes no farther notice of the Works of Nature, than as they are manifestations of

the infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God; and therefore it refers all immediately to him, without any mention of the intermediate Natural Causes. But it gives such an Historical Account of Miracles, as to exclude all Natural Causes, and by describing with what Circumstances they were brought to pass, shews, that they could not be produced by the Natural Course of Things. Natural Effects are ascribed to God, as the Creator and Preserver of all Things; by whose Power and Influence alone it is, that Natural Causes can act. But Miracles are ascribed to him, as acting without any subserviency of inferior Causes. It is one thing to omit the mention of Natural Causes, and another to exclude them. Both Scripture and Reason teach us, that no Child can be conceived but by the Power of God: but we read, that Christ was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a Virgin. St. Paul preached to the *Athenians*, that in God *we live, and move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. But when *Lazarus* was raised to life again, after he had been dead four Days; and when St. Peter, by pronouncing only a few words, caused a lame Man to walk, we know from the Circumstances, that this Life, and this Motion was above all the Powers of Nature to bestow.

III. Miracles are more peculiarly the Works of God, because they are wrought without the Concurrence or Subserviency of Natural Means. For though sometimes outward Means were used in the miraculous Curing of Diseases, yet they were such as could have no effect in the Cure, but rather the contrary; as when the Man that was born blind received his Sight by washing in the Pool of *Siloam* at our Saviour's Command, after his Eyes had been anointed with Clay made of Dust and Spittle. The Ointment made of Dust and Spittle was so far from having any Effect towards the Cure, that it would have been much more likely to have put out the eyes of a Man that had seen; and

and the Washing afterwards could only remove that which was so far from being a Remedy, that it must have been an Obstruction to the best Sight. That this Miracle might appear to be done by no Medicinal Vertue, but by that Power, by which Man was at first formed, our blessed Lord was pleas'd to use the same matter, even the Dust of the Ground, to shew that it was a Creation rather than a Cure.

As many miraculous Cures were wrought by our Saviour, without any more than a Word speaking, and sometimes even without so much as that, to shew that he had no need of Means; so when any Means were used, they were such as apparently could not tend to the Cure, and were not used as Remedies, but as Circumstances in the working his Miracles, to raise the Attention of the Beholders, to imprint what was done the deeper upon their Memories, and to give the greater Credibility to the History of his Miracles. For all matter of Fact is to be prov'd or disprov'd by Circumstances; and the more Circumstances concur in any Action, the less liable it is to Mistake or Imposture. Our Saviour therefore was pleas'd that his Miracles should always be accompany'd with remarkable Circumstances, which were sometimes of one kind, and sometimes of another, the better to work upon the Variety of Mens Tempers and Dispositions; but whatever outward Means were at any time used by him, it could have the Nature only of a Circumstance, and was no more proper and effectual to produce the Miracle, than any other might have been. Some he touch'd, some he only spoke to, and others he sent to the High-Priest, that he might be a Witness of the Cure. Now the Touch, the Speaking, or the Sending could have no Effect as outward Means, but only as they were attended with an inward and Divine Efficacy. But all these were considerable Circumstances to excite the Observation of those who were present at these Cures, and to preserve the Remembrance of them to Posterity.

IV. Tho' our Saviour had the most absolute and unconfined Power of working Miracles at all times, and before all Persons, whensoever he pleased, yet we may observe that he sometimes refused to exercise it. For though he could always do his marvellous Works, yet it was not fit that they should be always done, but then only when they might be useful and serviceable to the Ends for which they were wrought, and to his Design of coming into the World, to manifest himself by working them. And that this was the Reason why our Saviour did sometimes require Faith as a Qualification in them who came to be healed, and at other times refused to work his Miracles before Unbelievers, will be evident, if we consider, that

1. Christ had given undeniable Proof of his miraculous Power in many Instances, before he required Faith, as a Condition in such as came to him to see his Miracles, and to receive the Benefit of them. When the *Jews* demanded a Sign of our Saviour, *John ii. 18.* he had wrought before them the greatest of all his Miracles, in ^a *St. Jerom's* Judgment, by casting the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. But they were so unreasonable as upon this very account to ask for another Miracle: *What Sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou dost these things?* Whereupon our Saviour signifies to them, that he would rise again from the Dead; and this was no Refusal, but only a short Delay of his working other Miracles; for at that very *Passover when he was in Jerusalem in the Feast-day many believed in his Name, when they saw the Miracles which he did.* He rewarded the Faith of *Two Blind Men*, by opening their eyes, *Matt. ix. 29.* which was a proper Instance, to shew, that there might be a full Assurance of the Truth of Miracles, without the Sight of them; or else, what would become of the Blind? How should Men in remote Countries and future A.

^a Comment. in Matt. xxi. 15.

ges be saved? He rejected the unreasonable Demand of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sought to destroy him for working one Miracle, and blasphem'd the Holy Ghost when he had wrought another, and yet required a Third, *Matt. xii. 38.* And then the first time we find Faith required as a Disposition or Preparation in Men to have Miracles wrought for their Cure, or their Conviction, is *Matt. xiii. 58. Mark vi. 5.* And before the time to which these Texts have relation, Christ had cured *all manner of Diseases*, and cast out many Devils, and his Fame was spread abroad throughout all the Region round about Galilee, and even throughout all Syria, *Matt. iv. 23, 24. Mark i. 28.* He had cured the Centurion's Servant at a distance, and had restored to Life the Daughter of Jairus a Ruler of the Synagogue. Where it may be observed, that he commended the Faith of the Centurion, tho' the Cure was wrought upon his Servant; that he exhorted the Father not to be afraid, but to believe, when his Fear or Faith could have no Influence upon his dead Daughter; as he also required Faith in Martha, that she might see the Glory of God in raising Lazarus, *John xi. 40.* He had cast out a Legion of Devils at once, and permitted them to enter into the Herd of Swine, to convince even the Sadducees, if any thing could convince them, that they were Evil Spirits which he had cast out, *Matt. viii. 13. Mark v. 9, 22.* And when our Saviour's Miraculous Power had thus manifested it self upon all sorts of Persons, upon the Absent, upon the Dead, and upon others, who could neither hope for, nor desire Relief of him, and this in the Sight of many who were still Unbelievers, and of some who charged him with casting out Devils by Beelzebub, *Matt. xii. 24. Luke xi. 15.* it was highly reasonable, that he should afterwards require a Belief of what he had already done, and was again able to do, before he would extend his Healing Power towards Men, and that he should work no new Miracles

for the Conviction of such as disregarded and disbelieved all that he had done before.

It doth not appear, that Christ ever required Faith of any before his working of a Miracle, who had not already seen him work Miracles, unless it were of his own Country-men, of the captious and malicious, and of some who came to be healed. His Country-men, by their Astonishment at his Doctrine and his mighty Works, seem to shew that they had no Experience of them before, but that they were unknown at least to the generality of them, any otherwise than by Report; but theirs was a peculiar Case, as I shall presently prove. Those who came to him with no cavilling Design, but with a Desire and Expectation of Help from him, cannot be supposed to doubt of his Power to do that for them, which they had seen him do for others; but many apply'd themselves to him upon the common Report and Fame of his miraculous Works, and it was requisite that these should believe what they heard so well attested, if they would receive that Benefit which they besought of him. But as to others, it cannot be prov'd that Christ did ever, in order to his working a Miracle, require Faith of them, who had never seen him work any Miracle before, though, if he had done it, there might have been sufficient Reason for it. But all besides, in whom the want of Faith is at any time alledg'd as the Cause, why they had no Miracle wrought upon their account, in order to their Conviction, had in all probability seen Miracles wrought by him before, which they would not believe, and that was Reason enough, why no more should be wrought for them, to be despised, as the former had been: Or however, our Saviour's Miracles were so publickly and frequently wrought, that they might have seen them, either before or afterwards, tho' they were not done purposely for them, when they required it. Those, of whom Christ at any time required Faith, before he would work Miracles,

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cles, were either such as had some malicious and captious Prejudice against him, or such as came to be cured of their Diseases and Infirmities.

(1.) As for the captious and malicious, there was great Reason why they should be rejected, and no Miracles should be wrought for them. We read that *he did not many mighty works in his own Country, because of their Unbelief*, Matt. xiii. 58. But tho' he did not many mighty Works there, yet he did some, which indeed were not many in comparison of what he did in other places. And there was a particular Reason why he did no more there, because it was his own Country, and they upbraided him with his mean Birth and Education; whereupon Jesus seeing them offended in him, said unto them, *A Prophet is not without Honour, save in his own Country, and in his own House*; and so, as it immediately follows, *he did not many mighty Works there, because of their Unbelief*. He had done many wonderful Works in the adjacent Countries, and his Fame was spread throughout all Galilee. He had preached in their Synagogues, throughout all Galilee, and cast out Devils, Mark i. 39. His first Miracle was in Cana of Galilee, and the Galileans were Witnesses to his Miracles at Jerusalem, John iv. 45. He wrought a Miracle in his own City, when the Scribes and Doctors of the Law out of every Town in Galilee were present, Matt. ix. 1. Luke v. 17. Here by his own City, we are to understand Capernaum, Mar. ii. 1. For leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt there, Matt. iv. 13. But his own Country, where he did not many Miracles, was Nazareth, and the Parts near it. When he went to Nazareth where he had been brought up, they said, *is not this Joseph's Son?* and were ready to expostulate with him, *whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy Country. And he said, verily I say unto you, no Prophet is accepted in his own Country*, Luke iv. 16, 23. He, who knew the Hearts of

all Men, ^b saw how unsuccessful all his Works would be upon his own unhappy Country-men, who had been so little moved with what they had heard of him, and with what many of them probably had seen him do in other places, that they only derided and vilify'd him: And he, who had so tender a Compassion for all Mankind, and with great Affection wept over *Jerusalem*, could not but have such a Concern for his own Country, as to refrain the working of those Miracles, which he had otherwise design'd, foreseeing, that they would only serve to aggravate their Guilt, and increase their Damnation, till by his Resurrection he should give an undeniable Evidence of his Divine Power, and then should send his Disciples among them after his Ascension, to whom they would have greater regard, as to Strangers, against whom they had not that unjust and foolish Prejudice. For we never read, that the Apostles did any where forbear to work Miracles, because of Unbelief, but in all Places, and among all Persons they shew'd forth the wonderful Works of God. But when the Works of Christ, which were so wonderful, and so well known in all parts of *Galilee*, had so ill effect upon those of his own Country: St. Mark says, *That he could there do no mighty Work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them, and he marvelled because of their Unbelief*, Mark vi. 5, 6. He wrought such Miracles as his infinite Goodness meely drew from him, and then wondred at the Obstinacy of their Unbelief, which hindred him from working any more. For there are some things which God himself cannot do, not for want of Power, but because it would imply an Imperfection in him, a Defect of Power, and a Con-

^b *Non quod etiam, illis incredulis, facere non potuerit virtutes multas, sed ne multas faciens virtutes, cives incredulos condemnaret, Hier. ad loc.*

tradition to his Divine Nature to do them. *The Lord could no longer bear with the Jews, because of the Evil of their doings, Jer. xlv. 22. God cannot lye, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13. Tit. i. 2.* He can act nothing unbecomming his own Wisdom and Goodness; he cannot do Miracles, when he sees they will be to no good purpose, but will be abused to a very ill one. Yet to shew his Compassion, and to manifest that his Power was not restrain'd in it self, but that their Unbelief had restrain'd it from them, he laid his Hands upon the Sick, and healed them, but did no more; for he can do nothing improper and unfit to be done.

The requiring of more Miracles, when sufficient had been wrought already, was a *Tempting* and provoking of God, it was impiously to bid Defiance to his Power, and to challenge him to do whatever they durst demand of him. For to tempt God, is to limit the holy one of Israel, Psal. lxxviii. 41. It is to distrust his Power, to confine it within certain bounds, and to require him, for a tryal, to manifest it in such instances, as the Tempters prescribe; *Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his People?* ver. 20. Our Saviour therefore rebukes the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, for seeking after a Sign, *Matt. xii. 39. xvi. 2.* But the first time, he had wrought a Miracle just before in the Cure of the Man, whose Hand was wither'd, and of the blind and dumb Man, who was possess'd with a Devil; and when they still required farther Signs, and being unmov'd with what had been already done, they had now charged him with casting out Devils by *Beelzebub*, our Lord had great Reason to refuse to work any more Miracles before such obstinate and ungrateful Men; Miracles he saw were so far lost upon them, that they serv'd only to render them altogether unpardonable in blaspheming the Holy Ghost; and therefore he tells them, That there was no other Sign left for them, who

who had not yet incurr'd that Sin which was never to be forgiven, but the Resurrection of the Son of Man. This was a Sign which might convince the most incredulous, and which in its effects and consequences was deny'd to none, but was reserv'd as the last means. And several things which were done and said by Christ in private, were not to be divulged till after his Resurrection, because before they might fall under Suspicion; but *that*, and the Miracles wrought by virtue of it, would sufficiently prove whatsoever his Disciples should say of him. When they again demanded a Sign, he had a little before heal'd great Multitudes, and had fed several Thousands by Miracle in the Wilderness; and therefore he again refers this *wicked and adulterous Generation of Men to the Sign of the Prophet Jonas*. Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Remains* lately publish'd, has observ'd, as the Reason why the *Jews* were so importunate for a Sign, notwithstanding the many Miracles which our Saviour wrought before them; that their Traditions taught them to expect these two Signs of the *Messias*, when he came, *viz.* that he should raise the Old Prophets, and other holy and famous Men from the Dead, and that he should bring down *Manna* for them from Heaven. In their Old Writings and Records, he says, they speak much of these Two things of their Expectation. I am inclined to believe that these Traditions, if they had been rightly understood, were not so blind and foolish, as that Learned Author styles them, but had respect to the very Time and Occasion, to which our Saviour refers the *Jews*, when they required these Signs of him. For at his Resurrection *many Bodies of Saints which slept, arose*, Matt. xxvii. 52. And speaking to them of the *Manna*, or Bread which came down from Heaven, he puts them in mind of his Ascension: *What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?* John vi. 62. Whereby he intimates, that then would be the time of sending
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this *Manna*, when upon his Ascension, he would bestow the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The time was not yet come for these Miracles to be wrought, they were not to be wrought at their Demand; it was sufficient that they had Intimations given to expect them, and in the mean time they ought to have been contented with others.

We have as little Reason to imagine, that our Saviour should work Miracles to gratify the Curiosity of *Herod*, Luke xxiii. 8. who *hoped to have seen some Miracle done by him*; or that he should expose his Divine Power to *Herod's* Contempt and Mockery, when he had so lately wrought a Miracle in curing the Ear of *Malchus*, who was so far from believing in him, that he was one of them who came to apprehend him. It was an Act of Mercy to cure this Man, but to work Miracles only to give Men an occasion to vilify that Power by which they were done, could be neither worthy of God, nor any Charity to Men, but it would have been unsuitable to the Character and Authority of Christ, to debase himself to a Compliance with them, who used him with such Scorn and Derision, and only reviled and tempted him. *Herod* was disappointed in his hope and expectation of seeing a Miracle, and was not deny'd it for want of Faith: For he believ'd that Christ had wrought Miracles, and suppos'd that *John the Baptist*, whom he had beheaded, was risen from the Dead, and that therefore mighty Works did shew forth themselves in him, Matt. xiv. 2. But perceiving him not to be *John the Baptist*, he set him at nought.

(2.) In the case of those, who came to desire his help for the Cure of themselves and others, though they had not seen any Miracle wrought by him before, yet it was reasonable that Christ should work no Miracle for them, if they wanted Faith in what he had already wrought, and did not believe him able to perform, what they would seem to expect and desire him

him to do. When he had given so many Demonstrations of a Divine Power, he might justly expect an Acknowledgment and Belief of it in all that came to him, and would receive any Benefit from it. He might surely bestow his Favours and Benefits upon his own Terms; and no Terms could be more reasonable, than that those who came to ask them, should really believe, that he was able to bestow them, and should apply themselves to him, with an expectation to receive what they asked of him: Otherwise to come to him for Cure, was no better than to *Tempt*, to Mock and Deride him; it was to ask what they did not believe he could bestow; but they resolv'd only to try what he could do, supposing that if they received no good, yet however there could be no hurt in the Experiment.

Now, can any Man think, that the Miracles which Christ wrought, were to be bestowed upon no better Considerations than these? Or, that those were in any measure worthy to be Cured, who came with so indifferent an Opinion of him, and with so little expectation of Relief? Christ wanted no opportunities of shewing his Power; he had shewn it in many and wonderful Instances, and would do it again as often as he saw occasion, upon fit and proper Objects: But if they so little regarded what he had already done, as not to believe that he had done it, and could again perform the same, they but ill deserved what they came for; the Divine Power and Goodness was not thus to be debased and exposed, as to be employed in the Cure of Men, who asked, what they did not believe he could perform, but only thought it would cost them nothing to make the Tryal, and for that Reason made Application to him. Our Saviour therefore says to the Father, who came to him in behalf of his Deaf and Dumb Son; *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*; and upon that humble and passionate Declaration, *Lord, I be-*

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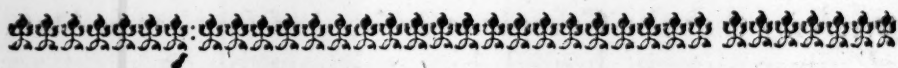
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I believe, help thou my unbelief, the Evil Spirit was cast out of his Son, *Mark ix. 23, 24.*

The End and Design of Christ's Miracles required, that those, who were Cured by him, should believe in him. For they were wrought with a design to convince Men that he was the Son of God, and that he was come not so much to Cure their Bodies, as to save their Souls, and he forgave their Sins at the same time that he healed them of their Diseases, *Mark ii. 5.* And since Faith is so necessary a Doctrine of the Gospel, it was as requisite that Christ should teach this, as any other Doctrine: But how could he do it more properly and more effectually than by requiring Faith in those who came to be healed? If they would partake of his Mercy, they must qualify themselves for it, by believing that he was the great Prophet and Messias, who was then so much expected, and of whom it was foretold, that he should make *the Blind to see, and the Lamé to walk, and the Deaf to hear, &c.* *Luke vii. 22. Isa. xxxv. 5.* And unless their Bodily Cure did conduce to the Cure of their Souls by Faith and Repentance, it would be but ill bestowed upon them, and therefore with great Reason might be denied them. And upon this Account, we find our Blessed Saviour both requiring Faith in some, and rewarding it in others, to whom his miraculous Power was extended, *Luke viii. 48. xviii. 42.* And St. Paul perceiving that the Creeple at *Lystra had Faith to be healed*, immediately healed him without being ask'd to do it, *Acts xiv. 9.*

2. Faith, in the Miracles of Christ, is required of Men in all Ages of the World, though Miracles are ceased; and if this be reasonable now, it could not but be fitting then, that those who came to Christ, should believe in him for the sake of the Miracles which they had been certified that he had done upon others. For Miracles, when they are fully attested, are as sufficient a Ground of Faith, as if we had seen them

them done; and to manifest that they are so, our Saviour might require Belief in his former Miracles, of those who expected any Advantage from such as they desired him to do. If they would give no Credit to the Miracles, which were so notorious, and so abundantly testified by Multitudes who saw them done, how should others believe in Times to come, when no more Miracles should be wrought for the Conviction of Unbelievers? Might no Man be required to believe, unless he saw the Miracles himself? Then how should the Church subsist in future Ages, when Miracles would be no longer wrought, but were for great Reasons to be with-held? We must now believe upon the Account of the Miracles which were then done; and why therefore should they not be required to believe upon the Account of them, who lived at the very Time, and in the same Country where they were wrought, though they had never seen them? Our Saviour, in these Instances, might introduce that Method, and establish the Evidence and Certainty of those Means and Motives, whereby Faith was to be produced in Men of all succeeding Ages, and might hereby signify and declare, that he requires the same Faith of us from the Testimony of others, that he would do, if we had seen and experienced his miraculous Power our selves.



C H A P. XXXI.

Of the ceasing of Prophecies and Miracles.

PROPHECIES are generally of more Concernment, and afford greater Evidence and Conviction in future Ages, than when they were first delivered. For it is not the Delivery, but the Accomplishment of Prophecies, which gives Evidence to the Truth of
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any Doctrine: The Events of Things in the Accomplishment of Prophecies are a standing Argument to all Ages, and the length of Time adds to its Force and Efficacy; and therefore when all that God saw requisite to be foretold, is deliver'd to us in the Scriptures, there can no longer be any need of New Prophecies; which would be of less Authority than the ancient ones, inasmuch as their Antiquity is the thing chiefly to be regarded in Prophecies. For, if to foretel Things to come be an Argument of a Divine Prescience, the longer Things are foretold before they come to pass, the better must the Argument needs be. He therefore that requires New Prophecies to confirm the Old, little considers the Nature of Prophecies, and wherein the Evidence and Use of them lies; but in great Wisdom and Caution will give no Credit to the best Evidence, unless there were something less evident to prove it by.

The chief Enquiry then seems to be concerning the Cessation of Miracles; but from what has been elsewhere said, the Reason may appear, why the miraculous Power, which the Apostles received by the descent of the Holy Ghost, was not to be of perpetual continuance in the Church, but was to cease in future Ages. For the Cause and End of the Gift of Miracles bestowed upon the Apostles, was to make them capable of being *Witnesses* to Christ; and when the Gospel of Christ was sufficiently testified, there could be no longer need of such a Power, which was given to enable Men to bear Testimony to it. For what is once effectually proved by sufficient Witnesses, is for ever proved, and needs no after-Evidence, if this Proof be preserved and transmitted down to Posterity. The Power of Miracles continued till the Gospel had been preached not only in *Jerusalem*, and in all *Judea*, and in *Samaria*, but unto the utmost Parts of the Earth; which was the declared Intention of our Saviour in bestowing it, *Acts* i. 8. And when the Gospel had
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stood all the Tryals, and conquered all the Opposition that could be made against it by *Jews*, and *Heathen*, and Apostates themselves; when Miracles had been wrought for several Ages, before all sorts of Men, upon all Occasions, and had extorted a Confession from the Devils themselves of the Divine Power, by which they were wrought; when the Books of the Apostles and Evangelists, in which these Miracles are recorded, had been dispersed in all Nations and Languages, so that it was impossible that the Memory of them should be lost; when once the Gospel was thus divulged and attested to the World, it could not be necessary that this miraculous Power should be any longer continued: Because this is the only Reason and Design why Miracles should be wrought, to awaken Mens Attention, and prepare them for the Reception of the Doctrine which it revealed, and convince them of the Truth of it.

If then it be enquired, Why the Miraculous Gifts, which were at first bestow'd upon the Church, were not continued to it in all succeeding Ages: The plain Answer is; Because this Power was bestowed for the Establishment of the Christian Religion in the World, by convincing Men of its Truth and Authority; and therefore, when a sufficient Evidence had been given in all Parts of the World, of the Divine Authority of that Religion, upon the Account whereof these Gifts were bestowed, the Reason for the bestowing of them must cease, and the Reason why they should be bestowed ceasing, these miraculous Gifts must of consequence cease with it. God appointed in the Church, *first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers; after that, Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. It appears, therefore, from the Order of the Institution, that the miraculous Powers were inferior and subservient not only to the Apostolick and Prophetick Office, but to that of the Preachers of the Gospel.

spel. So that when the Doctrine was once fully taught and received, there could be no longer need of Miracles to recommend and enforce its Reception.

And thus it was likewise under the Law. It is observable, that we read of no miraculous Power bestowed upon any Man before *Moses*, The Creation of the World was delivered down with undeniable Certainty, and the miraculous Judgments of God in drowning the Old World, in the confusion of Tongues, and in the Punishment inflicted upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, with the Example and Instruction of the *Patriarchs* in every Age, were sufficient to keep up a Sense of the True Religion. But when a new Institution of Religion was to be introduced by *Moses*, miraculous Gifts were necessary to give Authority to it, and to oppose those false and lying Wonders which were in use among the Magicians in *Ægypt* and other Places. In the former Ages Predictions were very frequent, and they were delivered by the Patriarchs, who were Men of unquestionable Credit and Authority, and could have no need of Miracles to confirm the truth of their Prophecies, which were so usual in those Times; and when the Lives of Men were so long, divers Prophecies of the same Persons had been verified by the Event. But *Moses* had a new Law to deliver, and both He and the Prophets had a stubborn People to deal with, to whom the Message they were charged withal, was commonly very unwelcome; so that till this Institution was fully settled, Miracles became necessary.

But when the Old Testament had been sufficiently authorized and established by Prophecies and Miracles, and when by the Captivities and Dispersions of the *Jews*, the Divine Mission of their Prophets became known among so many other Nations; when the *Jews* were reduced from Idolatry, which they never practised after their Return from their Captivity in *Babylon*; and when they had made numerous Conversions a-

mongst the Heathens, then these miraculous Gifts were no longer continued, as they had been before in the *Jewish Church*, insomuch that it became a ^a Maxim among them, that after the Death of *Zachariah* and *Malachi*, and the rest of the Prophets, who returned from *Babylon*, the Spirit of God departed from *Israel*, and ascended; and, for above Four hundred Years together, the Gifts, both of Prophecy and Miracles, had been with-held from them, before the Manifestation of Christ. For though there were gross Errors, and dangerous Corruptions among the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, and other Sects of the *Jews*; yet since the truth and certainty of that Revelation, from whence these Errors might have been confuted, had been so thoroughly confirmed; all their Corruptions and Errors were not a sufficient cause for the continuance of miraculous Gifts; and the *Pharisees*, and other Sects, who were most fond and zealous of their several Tenets and Traditions, yet never durst pretend to a Power of Miracles, or Prophecy; but endeavoured to support themselves upon the Authority of *Moses*, and the Prophets. What they sometimes spake of ^b the *Bath Col*, or Voice from Heaven, deserves but little Credit, and amounts but to a Confession, that the Spirit of Prophecy had failed under the Second Temple, as the *Jews* themselves expressly acknowledge it to have done. ^c *Maimonides* declares, that the *Bath Col* did not denominate Men Prophets, and therefore it is not reckon'd by him among the Degrees of Prophecy.

I have already ^d proved at large, that the Evidence of those Miracles, which were wrought in the Primitive Times, affords as much Certainty to our Faith, as if we our selves had seen them wrought. And our Sa-

^a *Tradunt magistri: ex quo mortui sunt Prophetæ posteriores, Haggæus, Zacharias, Malachias, ablati est Spiritus Sanctus ab Israel.* Gemar. Sanedr. c. i. §. 13.

^b *Ibid.*

^c *More Ne-*

voch. Part. ii. c. 36, 41.

^d *Book I.*

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^e *Ad C*
^f *In Ir*

viour plainly says, notwithstanding his *Works*, which bore witness of him, that it was not to be expected, that his own Words should be rather believ'd than the Writings of *Moses*. For had ye believed *Moses*, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his *Writings*, how shall ye believe my *Words*? *John* v. 46, 47. And when once the Gospel had been attested by Miracles as the Law had been, and rendered as certain to all succeeding Ages, as a constant Power of Miracles could have made it, there could be no Reason, why such a Power should be any longer bestowed. Miracles were wrought in Evidence of the Truth of Revelations made to Mankind in the Old and New Testament, not to decide any Controversies arising amongst those, by whom the Scriptures are receiv'd: For to them the Scriptures are the Rule, by which all Disputes ought to be determin'd, and therefore the Gifts of Miracles were sometimes manifested among ^e Hereticks for the Conviction of Infidels, which is the true end and design of Miracles, and not to be any Note of Distinction between the Orthodox and Hereticks.

The Learned Mr. ^f *Dodwell*, by an historical Account of Miracles from the Times of the Apostles through the Ages next succeeding, has shewn, that they were always adapted to the Necessities of the Church, being more or less frequent, as the State of the Church required, till they at last wholly ceas'd, when there was no longer any need of them. For the only end and use of miraculous Gifts is the Confirmation and Establishment of Religion; and therefore when this is once fully confirm'd and establish'd, they can be no longer needful. But it seems rather necessary that they should afterwards cease, than that they should be continued; I mean, as to any constant Power of work-

^e Ad Orthodox. inter Justin. Martyr. Oper. Respons. v.

^f In Iren. Dissert. xi. §. 28, &c.

king Miracles residing in the Church. For tho' there may possibly be some extraordinary Cases, in which it may please God to manifest a miraculous Power, yet there is no Reason to conclude, that a constant Power of working Miracles should be continued to the Church, but rather that those Gifts should cease, when Religion has been confirm'd by a perpetual Course of Miracles for some Hundreds of Years together. Because

I. Miracles, when they became common, would lose the Design and End, and the very Nature of Miracles. For the Nature of Miracles consists in this, that they are an extraordinary Work of God; not that they are more difficult, than the ordinary Works of Nature: All things are alike easy to God, and Miracles are as easy as any thing in the constant Course of Nature can be; the only difference is, that Miracles are his wonderful Work, they are more apt to raise our Wonder and Admiration, and to put us in mind of a Divine Presence. For we wonder at strange and unusual things, and suppose a more than ordinary Reason for them. But if Miracles had continued in all Ages, this Effect of Miracles would have ceas'd, and they would no longer have been Miracles, but a kind of different Course of Nature. For, according to the best and most accurate Philosophy, nothing in the settled Course of Nature can be perform'd without an immediate Influence of the Divine Power; but in Miracles this Power manifests it self in an extraordinary manner, above and contrary to the Established Laws, or Rules, which God has in all other cases prescribed for the producing Effects.

II. Men would fancy to themselves some kind of Scheme, or other, and would frame some Notions and Conceits to give an Account of Miracles; or they would imagine them to return of course at certain Periods, or upon some Accidents, if they saw them frequently done, or perhaps they would suppose them

to proceed from some defect in the Nature of Things, which could not always keep its Course, but made many Deviations from it. But when Miracles were wrought only in some Ages for peculiar Reasons, this shews that they were done by an immediate Divine Power, with a particular Design, which could be no other, than the Confirmation of Religion, since they ceas'd both under the Law and the Gospel, when both were fully declar'd and confirm'd.

III. A perpetual Power of Miracles in all Ages would give occasion to continual Impostures, which would confound and distract Mens Minds, and would make the true Miracles themselves suspected. The pretended ⁸ Prophecies of *Montanus* and other Hereticks had never gain'd that Credit, which they met withal, but because miraculous Gifts were then still continued in divers Churches. And we see now, that the Dreams of every Enthusiast, and the Pretences of every Impostor are apt to startle weak Minds, though we have so much Reason not to expect Miracles, or Revelations. But if we were in constant expectation of True Miracles, the False would be much more likely to mislead many, and to make others reject the Belief of any Miracles at all.

If Prophecies and Miracles had been frequent in the Jewish Church to the Coming of our Saviour, his Prophecies and wonderful Works had not so well distinguished and manifested him to be the Christ. But when after so long an Intermission, they were again revived in him, this shew'd him to be the great Prophet and *Messias* who was expected. And it is very observable, that as Miracles had been discontinued for a long time among the Jews; so St. *John Baptist*, who was more than a Prophet, and as great as any of all

⁸ Πλείσται γὰρ καὶ ἄλλαι ὁρτοδοξοποιῖαι τῶν θεῶν χαρίσματά ἐστιν· τι τότε καὶ διαφορὰς ἐκκλησιῶν ἐνηλεῆσθαι, πίστιν ὁρτο πολλοῖς τῶν κακόντων προφητεύειν παρέχον, Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 3.

the Men that had been before Christ; yet wrought no Miracles, that he might be the better distinguish'd from the *Messias*, and that there might arise no Doubt in the Minds of any, which of them was the Christ. And when our Saviour had been acknowledg'd to be the Christ in all parts of the World, it was fit that Miracles should cease, to preserve the Authority due to the Miracles wrought by himself, and his Disciples; it being more for the Honour of Christ, that the Miracles wrought in his Name should cease, when his Religion had been fully established, than that Men should be tempted to doubt who was the true Christ, and which was the true Religion, upon the account of False Miracles wrought in opposition to the True.

IV. Another Reason why the Gift of Miracles has been with-held in latter Ages may be this; because since there has been a general Depravation of Manners among Christians, it would have prov'd a great occasion of Pride and Vain-Glory to those who had possess'd it, as we find it was to some even in the times of the Apostles, 1 Cor. xii. 14. And our Saviour saw it requisite to give a Caution to his Disciples, *Notwithstanding in this rejoyce not, that the Spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoyce, because your Names are written in Heaven*, Luke x. 20. It must be an eminent and truly Primitive Piety, that could bear the having of such Gifts with an humble and Christian Temper of Mind.

It is an Observation of ^h my Lord Bacon's, That *there was never Miracle wrought by God to convert an Atheist, because the Light of Nature might have led him to confess a God: But Miracles are designed to convert Idolaters, and the Superstitious, who have acknowledged a Deity, but erred in his Adoration; because no Light of Nature extends to declare the Will and true Worship of God.* For the same Reason, when once the true Re-

^h *Advan. of Learn.* l. iii. c. 2.

ligion is confirm'd in such a manner, as to have the same Evidence for it, which there is for the Existence of God himself, Miracles are no more to be expected to convert an Infidel, than to convert an Atheist. Among Men of Learning and Reason there ought to be no more doubt of the Truth of the Gospel, than of the Being of a God, and they without the help of Miracles may instruct others. ⁱ *Acosta* enquiring into the Cause, why Miracles are not wrought by the present Missionaries for the Conversion of Heathen Nations, as they were by the Christians of the Primitive Ages, gives this as one Reason, because the Christians at first were ignorant Men, and the Gentiles learned; but now on the contrary all the Learning in the World is employ'd for the Defence of the Gospel, and there is nothing but Ignorance to oppose it; and there can be no need of farther Miracles in behalf of so good a Cause, when it is in the Hands of such able Advocates, against so weak Adversaries.

However, though there be no such Change as was wont formerly to be wrought in the visible Course of Nature, in Confirmation of our Religion, yet there is still a Divine Power evident among Christians living in Heathen Countries. For the Devil, who tyrannizeth over the Heathens, has no Power over Christians dwelling among them; of which the *Indians* have taken great Notice, and have ^k declared the Christians happy in being freed from the Tortures of Wicked Spirits, by which they find themselves often seiz'd on the sudden in a terrible manner, and stand in perpetual fear of them. ^l *Christians* they do acknowledge to have a Prerogative above themselves; and not to be under the Power of these Infernal Spirits. It is so generally related by Travellers of all Professions, both Protestants

ⁱ De Procur. Indor. Salute, l. ii. c. 9.

^k *Lerii Histor. Navig. in Brasil.* c. xvi.

^l *Capt. Knoxe's Hist. of Ceylon*, Pt. iii. c. 4.

and Papists, that the Devil exercises a manifest Tyranny over the Heathens, but is able to do nothing to the Christians abiding amongst them; that this cannot be denied to be a plain Argument of a Divine Power discovering it self in Confirmation of the Christian Religion, though not by such Miracles as were formerly wrought, because there is no longer any need of them.



C H A P. XXXII.

Of the Causes why the Jews and Gentiles rejected Christ, notwithstanding all the Miracles wrought by Him and his Apostles.

THOUGH the Christian Religion be most certain in it self, yet there is a Supernatural Grace required to make us thoroughly and effectually convinced of the Certainty of it. *No Man can come to me, says our Saviour, 'except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and this is declar'd to be the Reason of the Infidelity of such as were offended at his Doctrine, and departed from him. But there are some of you that believe not: for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him; and he said, 'Therefore said I unto you, that no Man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of my Father, John vi. 64, 65. So that the Belief of the Gospel is styled a Divine Faith, not only in respect of its Object, but of its efficient Cause. In attaining to the Knowledge of the Truth of Religion, we must proceed upon the same Principles of Reason, by which we proceed in attaining to the Knowledge of any other Truth. But Reason, when it comes up to the Evidence even of Demonstration, tho' it satisfies the Understanding, yet*

yet doth not necessarily gain that firm and lasting Assent of the Will, which is required in Faith; but when the thing prov'd to be true, is unacceptable, against the Inclinations of the Will, and against the former Opinions and Persuasions of the Understanding, the present Convictions of the Understanding are soon stifled and overpower'd by the prevailing Force of the Will and Affections, which carry the Mind off to other and contrary Objects, which it has been wont to think of and believe. Thus it was in the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*; they could not but have the same Sense of Mathematical Demonstrations, and other clear Truths, which the rest of Mankind have, whilst they thought of them, and attended strictly to them: But by a constant Practice to amuse themselves with Subtilties, they had wrought themselves to a Persuasion, that nothing could be certainly known to be true; and this general and habitual Opinion soon stifled the Evidence of any particular Truth, which could be represented never so clearly to their Minds.

To as many therefore as lay under long and violent Prejudices, by reason of their former Opinions, and of their Pride and Vanity in contending for them; or by reason of any of those Lusts, which are so contrary to the Purity of the Gospel; to such, an extraordinary and miraculous Power of Grace was necessary to establish them in the Faith, or else, though they believed for the present at the sight of some Miracle, yet this was no lasting or well-grounded Faith. *Many believed in his name, when they saw the Miracles which he did: but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all Men,* John ii. 23, 24. And that Grace, which was necessary to their Faith, was deny'd to some for their Sins, *that they should not see with their Eyes, nor understand with their Heart, and be converted,* John xii. 40. So that Men of great Learning and worldly Wisdom might still continue Unbelievers, and not submit to all the Evidence of the Gospel,

pel, because the Doctrine of the Gospel being so contrary to their habitual Thoughts and Inclinations, there was something necessary to convert the Will and Affections, and to subdue the former Habits which had been rooted in their Minds by frequent Acts and length of Time, and which were too strong for any Convictions of the Understanding, that consisted but in transient Acts, and were soon lost and vanished, through the prevailing contrary Habits both of the Understanding, and Will, and Affections. And therefore Faith must necessarily be an Effect of Grace as well as of Reason; and where, because of former Sins and Provocations, this Grace was not vouchsafed, there could be no Faith, though there might be some transient Convictions of Mind, some faint Glimmerings, which were soon damp'd and extinguish'd, being over-power'd by former contrary Persuasions. And for the same Reason, those who had less Wisdom and Knowledge, but were not under the Power of habitual Lusts and Passions, and therefore were more easily persuaded to any thing, of the Truth whereof they were once convinced, were likewise the more easily converted.

The Causes why the Word became unfruitful, and so little prevail'd with many Men, are in the Parable of the *Sower* declar'd to be either inconsiderate Negligence and Ignorance, and the Advantage taken from thence by Satan; or want of Constancy in Times of *Tribulations* and *Persecutions*; or the *Cares* of this *World*, and the *Deceitfulness* of *Riches*; and the *Lusts* of other things, *Matth. xiii. 18. Mark iv. 9.* It was next to an impossibility for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God, or to become a Christian. They were not Natural so much as Moral Accomplishments, not so much Parts and Learning, as an honest and humble Mind, which were the requisite Qualifications for Men to become Christians, Because, as God the more freely bestowed his Grace upon Men thus qualified,

lified, so they were the better disposed to be wrought upon by it; whereas others, though they wanted a greater measure of Grace, yet had less vouchsafed to them. For *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble.*

Thus much in the general; I now proceed to give a particular Account of the Causes of the Unbelief both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

I. Since there is so great Evidence, that our Saviour is the true Christ, it may seem a wonderful and almost an incredible thing, that the *Jews* should so generally reject him, notwithstanding all the Means and Opportunities which they had above other Nations of being converted. But,

1. The *Jews* and Profelytes were converted in vast Numbers. Besides the Shepherds, *Simeon*, and *Anna* the Prophetess, acknowledged and adored our Saviour in his Infancy, as the true *Messias*, Luke ii. 25, 36. and it is probably ^a supposed that this was *Rabban Simeon*, the Son of *Hillel*, and Father of *Gamaliel*. The Title of *Rabban* was the highest of all Titles, signifying a Prince rather than a Doctor or Teacher, as *Rabbi* doth; and there were but Seven of the Posterity of *Hillel* who were dignified with it. *Nicodemus*, *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, and many others of Note and Eminency received the Christian Faith. About Three Thousand were converted at one time, Acts ii. 41. The number of men that believed was about five thousand, Acts iv. 4. The rest were awed by Threats and Punishments from joyning them to the Apostles, but the People magnified them, and Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of Men and Women, Acts v. 13, 14. Great Numbers were converted not only of the People, but of the Priests also, Acts vi. 7. ^b All

^a Buxtorf. de Abbrev. Hebr.

^b A great many of the Priests were obedient unto the Faith. πολὺς τε ὄχλος. multa turba, Acts vi. 7.

that

^ahat dwelt at Lydda and Saron, Acts ix. 35. A great number of the Grecians, or ^c Hellenists, who were Jews, speaking the Greek Tongue, believed, and turned unto the Lord, at Antioch, Acts xi. 21. Many of the Jews and Religious Profelytes followed Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiii. 43. A great multitude of the ^d devout Greeks, or Profelytes of the Gates, consorted with Paul and Silas at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 4. At Iconium, a great multitude of the Jews believed, Acts xiv. 1. Believers of the Sect of the Pharisees at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 5. Crispus, chief Ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his House, Acts xviii. 8. And Sosthenes, another chief Ruler of the Synagogue, Acts xviii. 19. 1 Cor. i. 1. Apollos, an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, was a Christian, Acts xviii. 24. Many Thousands (or Myriads in the Greek) Acts xxi. 20. And the number of them which were sealed, was an Hundred and forty and four thousand of all the Tribes of the Children of Israel, Rev. vii. 4. The People were generally well disposed to receive the Gospel; and when the Chief Priests and Rulers would have persecuted our Saviour and his Apostles, they were often forced to desist for fear of the People. And if the Apostles did not depart ^e from Jerusalem in the space of twelve Years, (as there is reason to believe) the number of Converts in all that time must needs be extremely great. The Church of Jerusalem flourished exceedingly from the Beginning, and the Bishops of that City were of the Nation of the Jews for ^f fifteen Success-

^c Ἑλλήνισται constantly rendred *Grecians* in our Translation, and Ἑλλήνες *Greeks*.

^d Σεβόμφοι προσήλυτοι Acts xiii. 43. *Profelytes of Righteousness*. Σεβόμφοι Ἑλλήνες, and οἱ Σεβόμφοι, Acts xvii. 4, 17. *Profelytes of the Gates*: such as Cornelius, Εὐσεβής, καὶ Φοβέβμφος τῷ Θεῷ, Acts x. 2. These seem to be styled only *devout Greeks*, and *devout Persons*, because they were not so properly Profelytes as the other, but were then in no good opinion with the Jews.

^e Euseb. Hist. lib. v. c. 18. Clem. Strom. l. vi.

^f Euseb. Hist. l. iv. c. 5. Demonstr. Evang. l. iii. c. 5. Cyrill. Hieros. Catech. 14. Sulpic. Sever. l. ii. c. 45.

sions,

sions, even to the final destruction of it by *Hadrian*. *St. James*, the first Bishop of that See, resided there, by ^g *St. Jerom's* computation, thirty Years; and the Presence and Government of a Bishop so generally esteemed by the *Jews*, could not fail of a very good and great Effect in the Conversion of that People. Many, even of the Rulers, being converted, the Scribes and Pharisees made their Complaints, that the whole City of *Jerusalem* would turn Christians, as ^h *Hege-*
sippus, who was himself a converted *Jew*, informs us; and the Pharisees said of our Saviour, when he was upon Earth, *Behold, the World is gone after him*, John xii 19. The Martyrdom of *St. James*, in the midst of *Jerusalem*, at the time of the Passover, was the most publick and illustrious Testimony to the Gospel that could be given, and the most proper means that could be used, to cure the Infidelity of that City before its Destruction. ⁱ *St. Simeon*, who succeeded *St. James* in the Bishoprick of *Jerusalem*, suffered Martyrdom at the Age of a Hundred and Twenty Years, and he was Bishop there ^k about Forty three Years. So that the Church of *Jerusalem* was governed by those Two Bishops above Seventy Years, which was the signal Favour of a merciful Providence to the *Jews*, and was not without very great and happy Success. The Epistles of *St. Peter* and *St. James*, and that of *St. Paul* to the *Hebrews*, purposely directed to the *Jews* and *Israelites*, shew that their Conversions were very numerous both in *Judea* and in other Countries. ^l *Eusebius* takes particular notice of the Multitudes of Believing *Jews* in the Bishoprick of *Jerusalem*, when *Justus*, the Third Bishop, succeeded to that See. And ^m at *Antioch*, *Rome*, *Corinth* and *Ephesus*, there

^g Hier. Catal. ⁿ Euseb. Hist. lib. ii. c. 23.

ⁱ Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 11, 32. ^k Tilm. Memoir. Tom. 2. Part. 2. p. 37. ^l Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 35.

^m See Mr. Thornd. of the Primit. Government of the Churches, c. 5. and Dr. Hammond on St. John, Epist. 2. and Rev. xi. 3. & Dissertat. 3. c. 1.

was one Bishop of the converted *Jews*, and another of the *Gentiles*, and, as Dr. *Hammond* supposes, at *Jerusalem* likewise, but there is little proof of it. There seems, however, to have been a custom of placing Two Bishops, one of the Circumcision, and another of the Uncircumcision, in all Cities, where the *Jews* were in any great Number mix'd with the *Gentiles*; ⁿ *Alexandria* excepted, where *Epiphanius* says, there never were Two Bishops, as in other Cities. And some of the most Learned *Jews* have been converted, not only in these Times, but in latter Ages. *Epiphanius* was brought up in the Jewish Religion, as the Greek *Menology* testifies, and he acquaints us, that ° *Ellel*, the Jewish Patriarch, sent for a Bishop to baptize him upon his Death-Bed. *Samuel Morochianus*, *Petrus Alphonsus*, *Paulus Burgensis*, *Nicolas de Lyra*, *Alphonsus de Zamora*, *Petrus Galatinus*, *Sixtus Senensis*, *Johannes Isaacus Levita*, *Tremellius*, and other Learned Men educated in the Jewish Worship, upon their Conversion, have been eminent Defenders of the Christian Religion. *Hieronymus à S. Fide*, after his Conversion, is said to have brought over many Thousands to Christianity. But it is observable, that the *Rabbins* of the greatest Note and Authority with the *Jews*, *Maimonides*, *Solomon Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and *David* and *Joseph Kimchi*, flourished in the most ignorant and corrupt Ages of the Christian Church, when Christians, by their superstitious and erroneous Doctrines and wicked Lives, had brought their Religion into contempt both with *Jews* and *Mahometans*, who then were more learned than in any other Age.

And many of the *Samaritans* as well as the *Jews* believed, *John* iv. 39, 40. and were baptized both Men and Women, even *Simon Magus* himself, *Acts* viii. 12, 13.

2. Many, even among the chief Rulers, were convinced, that Jesus is the Christ, who durst not own him,

ⁿ *Epiphan. Hær.* 68. n. 6. *Pearl. in Ignat.* p. 186.

° *Epiphan. Hær.* 30. n. 4.

John xii. 42, 43. But the Love of Riches, and the Praise of Men, made them dissemble their Convictions, and act against their Consciences, as we see too many amongst us act against their own Knowledge, and avowed Principles, every day.

3. Many had blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and thereby rendred themselves incapable of the Mercies of the Gospel; and others, by their other great Impieties, had brought themselves to such an impenitent state, that their *Eyes* were *blinded*, and their *hearts hardened*, that they should not see with their *Eyes*, nor understand with their *Heart*, and be converted, John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 25. Rom. xi. 8. And this seems to have been one Reason, why Christ commanded his Disciples to conceal his Person, and to say nothing of his Transfiguration till his Resurrection, Matth. xvi. 20. xvii. 9. that he might discover himself by degrees, and that the *Jews* might gradually be prepared to acknowledge him, and not sin, beyond all possibility of Conversion, before his Resurrection, and the manifestation of the Power of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles, which was the last means of Salvation, and those, who rejected this, were self-condemned, and *judged themselves unworthy of everlasting Life*, Acts xiii. 46. or, in effect, they denounced the Sentence of Damnation against themselves. In the judgment of *Josephus*, no Nation in any Age was ever so wicked as the *Jews* of his time were: he says, that God, ^P for their Sins, hardened their Hearts, to their Destruction; that he had pass'd the Sentence of Condemnation upon the whole People; and that he believes, if the *Roman Army* had not come, the Earth would have swal-

^P Επισκοπεῖ γὰρ αὐτῶν ταῖς γνώμας διὰ τὰς ὀφρηνόμας ο ὁ Θεός. Jos. de Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 10. Θεὸς ὃ μὴ ὁ τῷ λαῷ πάντος κατακρίνας, καὶ πάντων αὐτοῖς ὁδηγίας ὁδὸν, εἰς ἀπώλησιν ἀπετρέφων. C. 15. Οἶμαι Ἰουδαίων βροθυμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, ἢ καταποθῆναι ἀντὶ χάσματος, ἢ κατακλυθῆναι τῇ πόλιν, ἢ τῆς τῆ Σοδομικῆς μετὰ λαβεῖν κεραιῶν. πολὺ γὰρ τῶν ταῦτα παθόντων ἦν ἐκεῖ θύμην ἀβελήων. C. 16.

lowed up the City, or a Deluge would have destroyed it, or it would have been consumed, like *Sodom*, by Fire from Heaven. Among so wicked a People, it is no wonder that Conversions were not more general; and that those, whom *Titus* could not persuade to save their Lives, would not be prevailed upon by the Apostles, for the Salvation of their Souls.

4. The *Jews* had violent Prejudices against the Gospel, out of Zeal to their Law, and to their Traditions, which were in so much esteem and veneration amongst them, they feared that their believing in Christ might prove an occasion to the *Romans* to come and destroy them. *If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away both our Place and Nation*, John xi. 48. And to prevent this, the Chief Priests, and the Pharisees, in Council, agreed to the Expedient proposed by *Caia-phas*, of putting Christ to death, imagining, that would effectually put a stop to the spreading of his Doctrine among the People, who, above all things, could not endure to hear of Christ crucified; for they had general and earnest Expectations of a temporal *Messias*, whom not only their own carnal Hearts inclined them to hope for, but their Religion, as they imagined, commanded them to expect. And the Family of the famous *Hillel* being in so much Power and Authority at that time, might be a great inducement to them, to confirm them in their hopes, and to harden them against the Belief of a Crucified *Messias*. For ^a *Hillel* himself held the Government, or Presidentship, of the *Sanhedrin* Forty Years, and his Son and Grandsons after him in a continual Succession, for an Hundred Years before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*: So that the Splendor and Pomp of this Family of *Hillel*, says Dr. *Lightfoot*, had so obscured the rest of the Families of *David's* Stock, that perhaps they believed, or

^a Lightf. Hebr. & Talmud. Exercit. in Matth. xi. 1.

expected the less, that the *Messias* should spring from any of them; and one of their *Rabbins*, in the *Babylonian Gemara*, was almost persuaded, that *Rabbi Judah*, of the Family of *Hillel*, was indeed the *Messias*. They were all very unwilling to find him in so low and afflicted a Condition, when the Lustre of this Family had for so long a time attracted their Sight and Expectation; insomuch that *Rabban Simeon*, the Son of *Hillel*, is but slightly mentioned, and not with that *Encomium*, with which the rest of that Family are wont to be celebrated by the *Jewish Writers*; for this Reason, ^r if *Buxtorf* be not mistaken, because he was the same *Simeon* who declared our Saviour to be the Christ.

Tho' the *Jews* must have been convinced (if they would have attended to them) by all manner of other Means and Evidence, that *Jesus* was the *Messias*, yet they esteemed Temporal Pomp and Grandeur so essential to the Person and Character of the *Messias*, that they thought the Meanness of our Saviour's Condition, and the Ignominy of his Death, was sufficient to overthrow all the Arguments which they could possibly have, of his being the Christ; indeed their Minds were so fix'd upon this mistaken Indication, that they little regarded any other.

This bred in them that Ignorance, which was truly very culpable, but which yet was taken notice of in their Favour, as some mitigation of so heinous a Crime, as the crucifying of the Son of God, *Luke* xxiii. 34. *Acts* iii. 17. xiii. 27. *1 Cor.* xi. 8. But withal, it made them exceeding obstinate and deaf to all the Arguments that could be offered to convince them. When *St. Stephen* had answered their Accusations, and fully argued the case with them, they gnash'd on him with their Teeth, and cried out with a loud Voice, and st pp'd their Ears, and ran upon him, and sto-

^r De Abbrev. Hebr.

ned him, Acts vii. 54, 57. And when St. Paul had declared in all particulars, how he was converted, and appealed to the *High Priest*, and to the *Estate of the Elders*, for the truth in part of what he related; yet the People, in a Rage and Tumult, *lift up their Voices*, and said, *Away with such a Fellow from the Earth*, for it is not fit that he should live; they cried out, and cast off their Clothes, and threw Dust into the Air, Acts xxii. 22, 23. These are not the Actions of reasonable Men; no wonder, therefore, that they were not convinced by Reason.

5. *False Christs and false Prophets*, with their Signs and Wonders, were then very frequent, *insomuch that if it had been possible, they would have deceived the very Elect*, Matth. xxiv. 24. And the Jews were much more inclined to give credit to these, who complied with their Lusts and Desires, than to examine and consider the clearest Evidence, which must oblige them to take up the Cross, and follow a Crucified Saviour. The Cross of Christ was to the Jews a *Stumbling-block*, and they would believe any thing rather than it.

6. Another thing, which seems to have been a great hindrance to the Conversion of the Jews, was the custom in their Synagogues of the reading the Old Testament only in the *Hebrew Tongue*, when it was not understood by the People; This caused a long contention among the Jews, till ^f Justinian, to decide the Controversy, commanded that they should be permitted to read the Bible in the *Greek*, or any other Language, which they understood: and tho' he recommended the *Septuagint*, yet he allowed them *Aquila's Version*, but suffered not the use of their *Deuterofis* or *Misna*, which was contrived purposely to put a false sense upon the Scriptures, whilst they were read in an unknown Tongue.

^f Novell. 146. Tit. 29. c. 1.

7. Upon these, and such like Causes, the *Jews* rejected their *Messias*, and still continue in Unbelief, whereby are fulfilled many Prophecies concerning this very thing; and whilst they endeavour, in vain, to disprove all other Arguments, their Infidelity and Obstinacy it self is an Argument against them; the Prophets having foretold, that they would thus reject their *Messias*, as *St. Paul* proves, *Rom. ix. 27.* And it was no new, or strange thing, that the *Jews* should resist the *Holy Ghost*; they always did it, as *St. Stephen* tells them, as your *Fathers* did, so do ye: Which of the Prophets have not your *Fathers* persecuted? And they have slain them, which shewed before of the Coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murtherers, *Acts vii. 55, 52.*

II. What great Numbers of the Heathen Nations, in all parts of the World, were converted to the Christian Religion, is evident both from Christian and Heathen Authors of those Ages, in which the Gospel was first preached; and considering the general Depravation both of the Manners and Principles of those Times, it is no wonder that many should be contented with any Religion, or with no Religion at all, so that they might retain their Vices, rather than attend to any Arguments, which could be brought in proof of a Religion, that must oblige them to abandon and crucifie all their Lusts and Sins, and renounce their Ease and Safety, to live in Disgrace and Misery, and die in Torments. However, notwithstanding all these Discouragements, there was no^t Rank, nor Order of Men, nor Sect of Philosophers, but divers of the best and wisest of them were early Converts to the Christian Faith, such as *Sergius Paulus*, *Dionysius the Areopagite*, *Justin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Tertullian*,

^t — tam magnis ingeniis præditi Oratores, Grammatici, Rhetores, Consulti juris, ac Medici, Philosophia etiam secreta rimantes, Magisteria hac expetunt, spreto, quibus paulò antè fidebant. *Arnob. lib. ii.*

Cyprian, Arnobius, and others. And as nothing but the clear Evidence and Force of Truth could convert these; so it is no unaccountable thing, that others should stand out and oppose it. For,

I. *The Greeks sought after Wisdom*; they were only for high and subtil Speculations, and were so possess'd with their own Notions, and a Conceit of themselves, that they would give no Attention to a company of ignorant Men, who told them a plain Truth, of one that had been Crucified, and rose again from the Dead. *Christ crucified was unto the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. Nor was the Cross only of Christ made a matter of Scandal and Offence, but his Resurrection and Ascension were thought impossible; it^v was supposed a thing incredible, that God should raise the Dead, Acts xxvi. 8. and no less incredible, that he should, or could bestow upon Men eternal Life.

The several Tenets of Philosophy then in vogue, were a great obstruction to all such as thought themselves skilled in them, to hinder them from becoming Christians; and we find that some of them, after their Conversion, could not soon lay aside all their Philosophical Notions. The *Epicureans*, a confident and vain Sect, would receive nothing that could be said to them of a Resurrection and another Life, but with Scorn and Contempt: *And some said, What will this Babler say? And when they heard of the Resurrection of the Dead, some mocked*, Acts xvii. 18, 32. The *Platonists* held a Revolution of all Things into their former state, in some certain term of Years, and therefore they, by their own Principles, must look upon

^v *Imperfecta verò in homine natura precipua solatia, ne Deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, — Nec mortales aternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos.* Plin. Hist. l. ii. vii.

Hæc & nos risimus aliquando. De vestris fuimus. Fiunt non nascuntur Christiani. Tertull. Apol. c. 18.

all only as a Consequence of such a Revolution and Period of Time. The *Peripateticks* were persuaded, that the World is eternal, and therefore laugh'd at those who seem'd to them to teach, that it was now just at an end, and declared, that it had a beginning not many thousands of Years before. The *Stoicks*, who mightily improved the Moral Part of Philosophy, by borrowing from the Christian Doctrine, yet holding that all things are under an inevitable Fate and Destiny, had such a perpetual curb upon them, as left them no liberty to think of changing their Opinions; one of which was, that there is nothing Immaterial; a plain Contradiction to the Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

Besides, there was a great deal of Pride in the very Composition of a *Stoick*. It * appears from the Account which *Arrian* has given of *Epictetus*, that neither the Jewish Law, nor the Christian Religion, was unknown to him; for in the Discourses which he has preserved of *Epictetus*, we find him sometimes using the same words with the Scriptures. But it appears likewise from those Discourses, that *Epictetus* was a great Admirer of *Diogenes* the Cynick, and imitated him in his Pride and Haughtiness. For, magnifying himself as one sent by God to be an Example to the World, and to prove that the high Sayings of the *Stoicks* are not vain Boasts, but real and practicable Truths, he at last thus concludes, "How do I converse, says he, with these Men, whom you fear and admire? Do not I treat them as Slaves? Who, when he sees me, doth not think he sees his King and his Master? There could be little hope, that such a Man should be wrought upon by a Religion which enjoineeth, That in lowliness of mind each esteem other better than themselves, Phil. 2. 3. y *Seneca*,

* *Arrian*. *Epict.* lib. iii c. 22. y — *Prope est à te Deus, tecum est, intus est. Ita dico, Lucili, sacer intra nos spiritus sedet, bonorum, malorumque nostrorum observator & custos, &c.* *Senec.* *Epict.* 41.

in some places, writes as if he had been transcribing the Scriptures, but he is not always the same, and he likewise discovers a strange Vanity and Conceit of himself and his own Writings. For citing a Passage of *Epicurus*, where he told his Friend, That if he desired Glory, his Letters should make him more famous than all those things which he esteemed, or for which he was esteemed. ^z *Seneca* assures *Lucilius*, That he could promise him as much as *Epicurus* had done his Friend: For he should be Famous in future Times; and could raise and perpetuate the Fame of whomsoever he pleased. But it seems most of all strange, that the excellent Emperor *M. Antoninus*, who had so much of the Christian Morality, both in the Speculation, and in the Practice of it, should not also be of the Christian Faith, especially, if he owned, that a signal Miracle was by the Prayers of the Christians, obtained for the deliverance of himself, and his whole Army, as ^a *Tertullian*, who could not be ignorant of the truth of it, declares; and refers the Heathen Persecutors to the Emperor's Letters, in which he acknowledg'd the Fact, and order'd the Christians to be freed from punishment, and their Accusers to be punished. And ^b *Apollinaris*, Bishop of *Hierapolis*, who presented an Apology to this Emperor, mentioned the same Miracle; to which St. *Cyprian* also, writing to *Demetrianus* a Heathen Persecutor, alludes.

But it should be considered, that ^c *M. Antoninus* was very superstitious in all the Heathen Worship, and was so much addicted to the ^d *Sophists* of his time, as not only to endure, but often to humour their Insolence and Vanity; and from them he had his Notions of Philosophy, which agree with the Christian

^z Epist. 21.^a Apol. c. 5. ad Scap. c. 4.^b Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 5.^c Am. Marcellin. l. xxv. c. 4.^d Philostr. Vit. Sophist. in Herod. Hermag. Aristid. Adrian.

Doctrine, and not from the Scriptures. For he owns in his Book, from whom he had received his Precepts; but if he had read and considered the Scriptures, he could never have looked upon the Zeal and Fortitude of the Christian Martyrs, as ^e Obstinacy. But the *Sophists*, who made it their business to oppose the Gospel, knew, they could not better recommend themselves to him, than by teaching its moral Doctrines, and preventing that esteem, which he must needs have had of the Christian Religion, if he had known, that to this, those Doctrines, which he so much admired, owed either their Original or Improvement.

Whatever Opinion he had of the Christians, he was wont to attribute too much to his own ^f Virtue and Piety, to ascribe his Deliverance wholly to their Prayers. And after all the Praises, which have been justly given to *M. Antoninus*, it must be acknowledged, that he valued himself extremely upon Two Things, which were very great hindrances to his Reception of the Gospel, *viz.* The ^g Study of Philosophy, and the Love and Esteem of his People. For it is no wonder, that an Emperor, who made the Philosophy of those Times his Study, the *Sophists* his chief Favourites, and Popularity his Aim, should not be converted to a Religion so unpopular, and so opposite, in some of its principal Articles, to that which the World called Wisdom.

It is unconceivable, upon what Principles of Religion or Philosophy this Emperor could Deifie ^h *Lucius Verus* and *Faustina*; but it was impossible that he could do this, and be at the same time a Christian; that the same Man, who Deified notorious Wickedness, because it had been cloathed in Purple, and shined in Imperial Robes, should believe in the Son of God crucified, is utterly inconsistent.

^e Lib. xi. §. 3.

^g Capitolin.

^f Vulcat. in Cassio.

^h Id.

The *Pythagoreans* were a superstitious Sect, and were apt to ascribe all to Magick; and, besides, they had given themselves up by a blind Obedience to their Master's Dictates, and therefore were to regard no Reasons nor Arguments against them. In short, the Philosophers were all exceedingly prepossess'd and prejudiced by some peculiar Opinions of their own, besides the general Prejudices which they lay under with the rest of the World. And all Men of any Learning and Education, studied the Books of the Philosophers, and were commonly addicted to one Sect or other.

But notwithstanding all the Philosophy of those Times, such was the Prophanation of all Religion, that the best and wisest Emperors made no scruple to receive Divine Worship; nor Men the most celebrated for Vertue and Learning to pay it them, for none but Christians refused; and therefore the Tryal which † *Pliny* made, whether those who were brought before him were Christians or no, by requiring them to burn Incense, and make a Libation of Wine to *Trajan's* Statue.

It must be confess'd, that Vanity and the Praise of Men was the chief aim of many of the Philosophers, as *Tertullian* and others of the Fathers object; and therefore they were very unlikely to become Proselytes to a Religion, which was looked upon in the World with such disdain and contempt. Philosophy in general, if we believe ^h *Quintilian*, was in his time, by most, used as an Artifice and Disguise to conceal the worst of Vices under a morose Look, and a Habit different from that of other Men. * *Seneca* says their Discourses against Vices were Satyrs upon themselves. And from such Philosophers as these, we must expect, that the Scriptures should be read with no manner of

† *Plin.* l. x Ep. 97.

^h *Instit.* lib. i. c. 1.

* *Senec.* in exhortationibus apud *Lactant.* l. iii. c. 15.

Candor, or good and serious Intention. ⁱ Justin Martyr says, that he found by his Conference with Crescens the Cynick Philosopher, that unless he prevaricated he understood nothing of the Christian Doctrine, and proffers to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, to prove this in his Presence, if he would be pleased to hear him, and to order him another Conference with that Philosopher. ^k Autolychnus, a Man of much Study and Learning, wrote against the Christian Religion before he understood it. And when ^l Amelius cited St. John's Gospel, and approved his Doctrine, he did it with such Philosophick Pride and Disdain, that he would not vouchsafe to name him, or to afford him any better Character than that of Barbarian. ^m Origen gives Instances of the wilful Abuse of the Scriptures by some of his time, who cavilled at half Sentences, without taking notice of the Coherence which they have with the rest. And he complains that ⁿ Celsus seem'd never to have read the Scriptures, though he pretended to a very exact Knowledge both of the Jewish and Christian Religion, but understood little of either. ^o Athenagoras, who before him had read the Scriptures with more Care and Sincerity, though with the same Design, became converted, and wrote in Defence of that Religion, which he intended to oppose. ^p Hierocles likewise had read the New Testament, with a design to write against it, but he who could believe the Miracles of Apollonius Tyanaus, and prefer that notorious Impostor to our Blessed Saviour, and Maximus Aegienfis, Damis the Philosopher, and Philostratus, to St. Peter and St. Paul, shews so strange a Partiality, as

ⁱ Apol. ad M. Aurel.

^k Theoph. ad Autolyc. l. i.

^l Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. xi. c. 19. Cyrill. contr. Julian. l. viii. p. 283. Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 2. ^m Contra Cels. lib. ii. ⁿ Ib. lib. i. ^o Philip. Sidet. apud Dodw. Append. ad Differt. in Iren. è Cod. MS. Baroc.

^p Euseb. contra Hier. & Lactant. Institut. l. v. c. 2, 3. De Mortib. Persecut. c. 16.

might be expected only in him, who opposed the Christian Religion by his Persecutions more than by his Arguments; for *Hierocles* was the chief Promoter of the Persecution under *Dioclesian*. *Porphyry* ^a apostatiz'd, because some Christians at *Cæsarea* had beaten him, and then made it his Business to justify his own Practice, and seduce others. Tho' ^r *Julian*, as was pretended, had been assured by his Gods of *Constantius's* approaching Death, and his own Accession to the Empire; yet to keep his Interest with the Christians, he basely played the Hypocrite; and when he had privately Apostatized, with a seeming solemn Devotion went to the Christian Church on one of the chief Festivals. What sense of Religion or of Honour could he have? *Julian's* ^s Character is, that he had a remarkable Levity in his Temper, was fond of vulgar Applause even in the least matters, was too inquisitive after Presages, and rather superstitious, than an exact Observer of the Heathen Rites. He had great Familiarity with *Libanius*, *Jamblicus*, and *Maximus Ephesus*, ^t who was put death for Magick under *Valentinian*. He made it his great Aim to be Chief among the *Sophists*, to ^u whom he wrote in Expressions of Fondness rather than of Friendship or Respect, and was of nothing more ambitious than to flatter them, and be flatter'd by them, with abundance of Art and Eloquence; and therefore he held every thing dear, that could procure him their Esteem; and became an

^a Euseb. apud Socrat. Hist. l. iii. c. 23.

^r Utque omnes, nullo impediante, ad sui favorem illiceret, adherere cultui Christiano fingebat, à quo jampridem occultè desciverat, arcanorum participibus paucis, Haruspicina auguriisq; intentus, & ceteris, quæ Deorum semper fecere cultores. Et ut hac interim celarentur, feriarum die, quem celebrantes, Mense Januarii Christiani Epiphania dictitant, progressus in eorum Ecclesiam, solemniter numine orato, discessit. Am. Marcellin. l. xxi. c. 2.

^s Id. l. xxv. c. 4.

^t Id. l. xxix. c. 1.

^u In Epist. ad Libanium, Jamblichum, & Maximum.

implacable Enemy to the Religion he had profess'd, tho' he could not deny, in his Writings against it, that Miracles had been wrought by Christ. Which is a prodigious and deplorable Instance, how prejudicial that which pass'd for Philosophy in those Ages, was to the Progress of the Gospel. The Prejudice and Obstinacy of such as persisted in their infidelity, is lively described by * *Lactantius*.

2. The Gentiles look'd upon the poor persecuted Condition of the Christians, as an Argument against their Religion, and were not only prejudiced against a New Religion, which must expose them to Sufferings, by that Fondness which Men naturally have for their own Ease and Safety, but y when they saw the Christians in Distress, they would upbraid them, as the Psalmist's Enemies reproach'd him, saying, *Where is now thy God?* They consider'd their own Religion as the Religion of their Country, and of their Ancestors, which was what *Tully* said for it, when he had ruin'd all the Grounds and Pretences in behalf of it. They alledg'd that this had been the Religion of their Forefathers, and that the *Roman Empire* had arrived to so much Power and Greatness under its Influence. They ascribed all the Calamities that beset the Empire, by Famine, Earthquakes, or Pestilence, to the Neglect of their own Worship, and the Progress of

* *Non est apud me dubium, Constantine Imperator Max. quin hoc opus nostrum—siquis attigerit ex istis ineptè Religiosis (ut sunt nimia superstitione impatientes) infectetur etiam maledictis, & vix lecto fortasse principio, affligat, projiciat, excretur, seque inextinguibili scelere contaminari atque adstringi posset, si hac aut legat patienter, aut audiat.—Non injustè petere videmur, ut siquis erit ille, qui inciderit in hac, si leget, perlegat; si audiet, sententiam differat in extremum. Sed novi hominum pertinaciam, nunquam impetrabimus. Timent enim ne à nobis revicti, manus dare aliquando, clamante ipsa veritate, cogantur. Obstreperunt igitur, & intercedunt, ne audiant; & oculos suos opprimunt, ne lumen videant, quod offerimus. Lactant, Institut. l. v. c. i.*

y *Aug. Civit. Dei, l. i. c. 29.*

the Christian Religion. This was so much insisted upon, as is to be seen in *Zosimus*, *Symmachus*, and others, that *Orosius* set himself to answer it, in a particular Work; and *St. Austin*, who put him upon writing it, thought himself concern'd in his own Works to oppose so unreasonable, but fatal a Prejudice, as *Arnobius* had done long before.

3. The Consequence of these Prejudices against the Christian Religion, both in Favour to the Religion of their Country, and in Fondness for their old Opinions, and out of an Abhorrence of Afflictions, and a Disregard of those, who were so much exposed to them, as having but small pretence to any part of the Divine Care; the Consequence, I say, of these Errors and Prejudices, was, that the Gentiles despised the Christian Religion, before they understood any thing of it. For many Men of Learning and Observation were so little acquainted with it, that they did not distinguish Christians from Jews, as we see by ^z *Suetonius*. They knew not so much as the true Pronunciation of the Name of *Christ*, or *Christian*, but were wont to write * *Chrestus* and *Chrestianus*. † Many had so strange a Prejudice and Abhorrence of Christians, that they would not so much as speak to them; so far were they from considering their Religion impartially. This the *Apologists* much insist upon, that they condemn'd and persecuted what they did not understand. The Christians desir'd no more than a fair Hearing, and if they might but be suffer'd to make their Religion fully known to their Adversaries, they begg'd no farther Favour.

4. It was believed, ^a that the Heathen Oracles had deliver'd, that the Christian Religion should continue

^z Sueton. in Claudio, c. xxv.

* Nam nec Nominis certa est notitia penes vos, Tertull. Apol. c. iii. Sueton. ib. Lactant. l. iv. c. 7.

† Orig. contra Cels. l. vi. Epiphan. Hæres. Q. xxvii. n. 3.

^a Aug. de Civit. Dei, l. xviii. c. 53, 54.

no longer than Three hundred and sixty five Years, and it is observable, that *Julian* the Apostate died A. D. CCCLXV. according to some Chronologers, tho' others place his Death Two Years before. It seems the Devil had some great Expectation from his Reign, but at or near that very time, in which he had foretold that the Christian Religion should have an end, (if the Computation were to be made from the Nativity of Christ) he saw an end of all his Hopes, in the Death of that Emperor, who was so zealous in his Service, and had given out severe Threatnings against the Christians of what they were to expect, if he had return'd victorious from that Expedition in which he perished. For this Prediction had respect probably to his Reign, though the *Greek* Verses in which it was deliver'd might be alter'd afterwards, or so contriv'd at first, as to extend it to a longer time, leaving it uncertain from whence the Calculation was to begin.

^b Great Boasts and Threatnings were undoubtedly then made, that, according to their Prophecies, in a short time, there would not be so much as the Name of *Christian* left in the World. However this Oracle kept many of the *Gentiles* from being Christians, till they saw the time past, which they supposed to be meant by it, as *St. Austin* assures us.

5. The Heresies and Schisms which soon arose in the Church, gave great Scandal and Offence to such, as judg'd of these things at a distance, and in the gross, without examining into the Occasions of them. The ^c *Jews* not only blasphemed *Christ* in the Synagogues, but made choice of Men on purpose, whom they sent from *Jerusalem* into all parts of the World,

^b Greg. Nazianz. Steliteut. ii. p. 99. Edit. Eton.

^c Just. Martyr. Dialog. Εὐαγγελιστῶν ἐν τοῖς ἑπτὰ παλαιῶν συγγραμμάσιν, ὡς οἱ τῇ Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκῶντες τῇ τῇ Ἰουδαίων ἔθους ἱερεῖς καὶ πρεσβύτεροι γράμματα ἀποκαρτέοντες, εἰς πάντα ἀσπίμψαντες τὰ ἔθνη τοῖς ἀπανταχῇ Ἰουδαίοις ἀποβάλλοντες τὴν χρεῖσθαι διδασκαλίαν — παρήγγελλον τε δὲ ἐπιστολὰν μὴ ἀδεύεσθαι αὐτοῖς. Euseb. in Esai. xviii. 4.

to vilify him and his Religion. ^d And because Christians spoke of *Christ's Kingdom*, this was understood to their Prejudice, as if they had been for setting up a Temporal Kingdom by Rebellion. And the evil Doctrines and Practices of divers Hereticks confirm'd Men in any ill Opinion, which they had conceiv'd of Christians in general. *By reason of them the way of truth was evil spoken of:* as St. Peter had foretold, 2 Pet. ii. 2. The absurd Doctrines and Heresies of the * *Gnosticks* and other Hereticks, were by the Enemies of the Gospel in their Censures and Invectives apply'd to all Christians without distinction, and were taken upon Trust by most Men. ^e *Celsus* makes Objections from the erroneous and wicked Notions and Practices of the *Ophitæ*, the *Valentinians*, the *Marcionites*, and others. Under the Denomination of the *Gnostick* Heresy, is comprehended not one particular Sect only, but rather all the most pernicious Heresies in the Primitive Times: and they all, as the Name denotes, made high Pretences to Knowledge; which caus'd them to be so much taken notice of, by the Philosophers, that ^f *Plotinus* and others wrote Books in Confutation of them. No wonder therefore that these Hereticks, who made so much noise in the World, pass'd with many Men for true Christians, and brought a Scandal upon Religion. Besides, ^g the Heathens examining the Servants of some Christians, were informed by them, that they had heard their Masters speak of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, which they understanding in a literal Sense, charged them with devouring human Flesh and Blood. This caus'd the Christians in their Apologies to press earnestly for a fair and impartial Hearing of their Cause, beseeching their Enemies, that they would

^d Just. Apol. 2.

* Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iii.

^e Orig. contra Cels. lib. vi, vii, viii.^f Plotin. *πρὸς τὸς**Γνωστικῶς*, Enhead. 2. l. ix.^g Irenæi Fragm. apud OEcumen. Comment. in 1 Pet. 3.

not be so injurious to the Truth and to themselves, as to despise and condemn what they did not understand: They were desirous to undergo any Trial, if they might but be admitted to be heard. On the other side, ^h forged Acts, bearing *Pilate's* Name, but with a Date which discover'd the Fraud, were, by *Maximin's* Command, dispers'd over all the Provinces under his Dominion, to be taught Children. And vile Women were at *Damascus* threatned with Torments, unless they would depose, that they were themselves Christians, and that they knew what had been reported against the Christians to be true. And this Confession likewise was publish'd in all Cities and other Places: And long before, under *Antoninus Verus*, Heathen ⁱ Servants, who belong'd to Christians, were apprehended in *Gaul*, and forced to depose against their Masters, all that could render them and their Religion odious. And the same Method of endeavouring to extort Evidence against Christians by Tortures, had been practis'd likewise in *Trajan's* Reign, by ^k *Pliny's* Order, upon some Deaconesses in *Bithynia*, even after Apostates, who worshipped Idols, and blasphemed Christ, had nevertheless vindicated his Religion from the Crimes charged upon it. And tho' the constant Asseveration of these Women under all their Torments, convinced *Pliny* of the Innocency of Christians, yet others were more unreasonable; and it was long before these Prejudices could be overcome in the generality of Men, especially, when Tortures were so often used to extort false Evidence.

6. Yet many, who did not actually become Christians, had more favourable and just Thoughts of the Christian Religion. ^l *Alexander Severus* had the Effigies of *Christ* in his Chapel, and had designed to erect a Temple for the Worship of him, and to insert his

^h Euseb. Hist. l. i. c. 9. l. ix. c. 57.

ⁱ Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 1.

^k Plin. l. x. Ep. 97.

^l Æl. Lamprid. in Alex. Severo.

Name among the Heathen Gods. As it is reported, that *Adrian* likewise, with the same intention, had commanded Temples to be built without Images in all Cities, but was dissuaded by some, who consulted the Oracles about it, which gave out, that all Men would then become Christians, and the other Temples would soon be forsaken. This, which is related concerning *Adrian*, has been, by some, supposed to be a mistake, because the Fathers say nothing of it. But *Æl. Lampridius* (or rather *Spartianus*) who mentions it, being a Heathen, might perhaps have it from the *Gentiles*; for it was only in *Adrian's* intention, to set up the Worship of *Christ*, which might be unknown by the Christians of his time, the design being laid aside upon consulting the Oracles. It was certainly reported in the Historian's time, as he declares, and yet this Objection lies as well against the Report as against the Reality of the thing: For it is strange that a Report of this nature should be mentioned by no Christian Writer, though there had been no truth in it. *Valerian* was so favourable to Christianity in the beginning of his Reign, ^m that his Palace was full of Christians, and was the Church of God, as *Dionysius* of *Alexandria* styles it, saying, that he was more kind and indulgent to Christians, than any of the Emperors before him, who were themselves publicly said to be Christians. He means, as *Valesius* thinks, *Philip*, and *Alexander Severus*: The Family of the latter consisted chiefly ⁿ of Christians, and it was in hatred to them, that *Maximin* began his Persecution.

° *St. Augustin* observed, that the *Romans*, who worshipp'd the Gods of all other conquered Nations, would not set up the Worship of the true God, when

^m Καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ θεοσεβῶν πεπλήρωτο, καὶ ὡς ἐκκλησία θεῶν.

ⁿ Οὐδε γὰρ ἄλλος τις ἔτι πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλέων σύμῃως καὶ δεξιῶς πρὸς αὐτοὺς διετέθη· οὐδ' οἱ λεχθέντες ἀναφανδὸν χριστιανοὶ γινόντων. Apud Euseb. Hist. lib. vii. c. 10. Id. lib. vi. c. 28.

° August. de Consensu Evang. lib. i. c. 12.

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they conquered the *Jews*; because they must then have abandoned all their false Gods. And ^p *Æmilianus*, the Prefect of *Egypt*, asked *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, when he was brought before him, Why, if he, whom the Christians worshipped, be God, they could not worship him with the other Gods. Many admired the Doctrine, and were convinced of the Truth of the Christian Religion, who could not free themselves from the Prejudices of their Education; they would have been willing to have it taken in among others, but could not bring themselves to relinquish all their old Religions for it. The Calumnies raised against the Christians, had caused the popular *Odium* and Rage against them, but they were vindicated by ^q *Pliny* in an Epistle to *Trajan*, by *Serenius Granianus*, Proconsul of *Asia*, in his Epistle to *Adrian*, by *Adrian* himself in his Rescript, by *Antoninus Pius* in his Epistle to the Common Council, or the Community of the Estates of *Asia*, though some ascribe this Epistle to *M. Antoninus*, (not to mention his Epistle to the Senate of *Rome*.) ^r *Severus*, not only kept *Proculus* with him in his Palace, by whom he had been miraculously cured, but gave an honourable Testimony of both Men and Women whom he knew to be Christians, and protected them from the Outrages of the People. ^t *Trypho*, the *Jew*, likewise frees them from the Crimes commonly laid against them, and owns the Excellency of their Precepts contained in the Gospel. And it is observable, that those Crimes which had been wont to be objected against the Christians by their former Adversaries, were not mentioned by *Julian*, in Discourses written to oppose them; who ^u elsewhere speaks of them in such a manner, and so much to their commendation, as shews the mighty force of

^p Euseb. Hist. lib. vii. c. 11.

^q Plin. lib. x. Epist. 97.

Just. Mar. Apol. 2. Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 8, 9, 13, 26.

^r Tertull. ad Scapulam. c. 4.

^t Just. Martyr. Dial.

^u Epist. 40. & Fragm. Epist. p. 305.

Truth which could extort it from him. But the Fear and Shame of Men hindred divers from embracing the Christian Religion, who had a truer Notion of Things than to approve of their own. ^u *Seneca* exposed the Heathen Worship, and exprefs'd himself with bitterness against the *Jews*; but being able to find nothing to blame in the Christian Religion, nor daring to commend it for fear of giving Offence to the Heathens, he made no mention of it at all. It is observed likewise, that *Plutarch*, who, as ^x *Theodoret* takes notice, was not unacquainted with the Gospel of Christ, makes ^y no Reflections upon our Religion. ^z *Victorinus*, a Man of very great Learning, and who, upon that account, had his Statue erected in the *Forum* at *Rome*, often acknowledged himself convinced of the Truth of Christianity, before he could be perswaded openly to profess it, for fear of displeasing his Friends that were Gentiles. He pretended, he might be a Christian as well in secret; and this, no doubt, might be the case of many others, who never made open Profession of it. ^a But in a general Consternation occasion'd by Earthquakes in the *East*, both *Jews* and Heathens, in great Multitudes, came to Baptism.

These, and such as these, were the occasions of the Unbelief of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: Though it must be confessed, that there is nothing more difficult to be accounted for than the Notions and Actions of Men; it is as hard to give an account how ^b *Seneca* and *Plutarch* should allow of the murdering or starving of poor Infants, (which they certainly did) as why they were not Christians. No *Phænomena* in Nature can be more variable and uncertain in their Causes than

^u Aug. Civit. Dei, lib. vi. c. 11.

^x Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 2. de Princip.

^y Ruald. vit. Plut. c. 9.

^z Aug. Confess. lib. viii. c. 2.

^a Aug. Serm. 4. à Sirmond. edit.

^b Senec. de Ira, lib. i. c. 15. Plut. in Lycurg.

the Opinions and Practices of Men, which differ according to their Tempers, and Capacities, and Circumstances; it is sufficient, if we can find out any probable Solution, and have several to offer, which might take place according to several Cases. But the Writings of such as opposed the Christian Religion, were very slight and frivolous, containing a Confession for the most part of the principal Matters of Fact, upon which our Faith is established, and raising only some weak Cavils which never came up to the main Cause, or undertook to disprove the Truth of the Miracles and Prophecies upon which it is founded. They could not deny the Miracles, upon which our Religion is established, and then let any Man judge what Reasons they could have for their Infidelity. And, indeed, the prevailing of the Christian Religion under all manner of Disadvantages as to Humane Means, shewed, that the Adversaries of it had little to say against it: For they must be but poor Arguments, which could not dissuade Men from becoming Christians, when they must incur all the Dangers and Sufferings of this World to be so.

The Books of the first Heathen Writers against the Christian Religion, are frequently cited by St. *Jerom*, and St. *Austin*, and other Authors of their time, as commonly known, and probably they were extant long after. So that their Arguments were baffled and destroyed long before the Books themselves, and they had time and opportunity enough to do all the mischief that they were capable of. And their Writings are not yet so far lost, but that we still know their principal Arguments, which the Christian Writers have not concealed, but have given them their full Force, and commonly in their own Words. *Origen* was so careful to omit nothing considerable which *Celsus* had alledged, that he was often forced to make Apologies for mentioning the same things over again, rather than he would seem to let any thing pass,

which was material, that his Adversary had said, without taking notice of it. And some ^c Pieces are preserved entire, as the Petition of *Symmachus* among the Epistles of St. *Ambrose*, and the Epistle of *Maximus Madaurensis* among those of St. *Austin*. The Arguments of *Julian* are set down at large by St. *Cyril*; and that Apostate was so great an Advocate and Patron of Heathenism, that the Enemies of Christianity had ^d a certain *Æra* for the computation of Years from his Reign, and seem to have proceeded upon the Artifices and Methods which he had settled: Yet we learn from ^e St. *Chrysostom*, that the Books of the Philosophers against the Christian Religion, were neglected and despised by the Gentiles themselves, and were scarce to be found but among the Christians, before the Edict of *Theodosius junior*, to prohibit them.

There was a long Succession of Philosophers and Sophists, who made it their business to oppose the Christian Religion. The School of *Platonists*, which continued at *Athens* for some Ages, would revive, or reinforce any Arguments that had been used by their Predecessors in opposition to Christianity. *Proclus* and *Damascius*, who were of this School, lived about the middle of the Sixth Age; ^f *Proclus* spent five whole Years in collecting the Notions of the former Philosophers, and in abridging the *Chaldaick* Doctrines from the Writings of the *Chaldeans*; and the best Commentaries upon the Oracles, written at large by *Porphyry* and *Jamblichus*: ^g *Syrianus* likewise Master to *Proclus*, had written ten Books concerning Oracles. So that no Care or Labour was omitted by these Learned and Zealous Men, to recommend their

^c Ambr. lib. ii. Epist. 11. Aug. Epist. 43.

^d Ἐτελεύτησε ὃ (Proclus) πρὸ δ' αὖ καὶ καὶ ε' ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουλιανῆς βασιλείας. Marin. vit. Procl. c. 36.

^e Πανόγυρ. εἰς βᾶβυλ. λόγ. β. Vid. Spanhem. in Julian. oper. Præfat. ^f Marin. Vit. Procl. c. 26.

^g Suid. in Συριανός.

own Religion to the World in opposition to the Christian. What ^h *Proclus* had to say against it, may yet be seen. The Writings of *Damascius* were extant ⁱ in *Photius's* time, in the middle of the Ninth Age; the History of *Eunapius* was then likewise extant, and is ^k said to be preserv'd at *Venice*: We have the Abridgment of it by *Zosimus*, and a sufficient Specimen of his malicious Invectives in his other Writings. And it is probable, that these, and many other Books of the like nature, which are now lost, continued much longer than any Accounts, which we have now remaining of them mention. Of about Thirty Answers ^l which were written to *Porphry*, by several Authors, not one of them is now to be found. When the World was satisfy'd of the Insufficiency of his Objections, the Answers to his Books were as little regarded as the Books themselves, but underwent the same Fate with them. in ^m *St. Augustin's* time the Pagans were very few, and the Enemies of Christ found they could give no colour or credit to their designs, but by assuming the Name of Christians. The *Platonists* became asham'd of the Heathen Theology, and invented new interpretations, to put a false gloss upon it. ⁿ The Doctrines of the *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* (he speaks of such as were peculiar to either Sect) were then little regarded, and none durst maintain them, but under the denomination of some Heresy or other; these Two Sects then were in so little Esteem, that they had not Authority enough to give those Errors any Countenance, which they before had so long with great Subtilty and Success defended against the *Platonists*; but they who

^h Vid. Fabric. de Procli Scriptis.

ⁱ Phot. Cod. CLXXXI. CCXLII. LXXVII.

^k Voss. de Græc. Hist.

^l Holstein. de Vit. & Script. Porphyr. c. xi.
Consen. Evang. l. i. c. 14, 15, 23.

ⁿ Aug. Epist. 56.

^m Aug. de

would gain any Reception to their Errors were at last forced to assume the Name of Christians, and betake themselves to some *Heresy*. Of *Plotinus's* School, some became Christians, and others apply'd themselves to Magick; as *Plotinus* himself must have done, if we believe all that *Porphyry* writes of him. The Relation of the Serpent, which was seen under the Bed, and then was observ'd creeping into a hole of the Wall, as he gave up the Ghost, is an odd Story. ° *Proclus* suffer'd himself to be adored, and a Serpent was likewise seen about his Head, in his last Sickness: This was the Effect of the *Theurgicks*, which these Philosophers profess'd, and of *Magick*, which *Porphyry*, upon the Authority of Oracles, styles the Gift of the Gods. The Arguments of *Proclus* against the Christian Religion were chiefly to prove the Eternity of the World; and have been so little regarded, that they were supposed to have been lost, till a Critick lately took notice, that they are still extant in the Answer to them by *Johannes Philoponus*.

The *Jews*, who from the beginning of Christianity, but especially since the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, have in vast numbers been spread all over the World, and have ever been the most implacable Enemies of the Gospel, had the greatest Opportunity to detect any Falshood in it, and have never omitted any Advantage of improving and enforcing the Arguments against it; and therefore would be sure to retain any thing considerable, which had been objected by their Forefathers, or by the Heathens, with whom they convers'd. The *Jews* have been a perpetual restless Enemy in all Parts and Ages of the World, and nothing material in this Case, would escape their Observation. But out of the Writings of the ancient *Jews*, which

° Marin. Vit. Procl. c. 25, 30.

p Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. vi. c. 4.

q Fabric. de Procli Scriptis, p. 80.

are still extant, many things have been alledg'd by many Learned Men, of our own and other Nations, in Confirmation of our Religion, from the Confession of the *Jews* themselves.

The Unbelief therefore both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* of those Ages, is no material Objection; nor altogether so unaccountable as the Unbelief of too many now, who were born among Christians, and have had their Education in the Christian Religion. The Truth is, Example is always the weakest Argument in any Case, and can be of no Force or Authority against the clearest rational Evidence. But the Propagation of the Gospel is it self an unanswerable Argument in proof of it. *The World hated it, because it was not of this World.* For which Reason it was long before the Kingdoms of this World were become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, (Rev. xi. 15.) And it appears by the Laws and Histories of the first Ages, after the Emperors were Christians, that the Gospel still prevail'd by its own Evidence and Worth, rather than by any other Power or Authority. The Jews were used with all manner of Indulgence, they enjoy'd great Privileges, they had their Patriarchs for near ccccxxix. Years after Christ, and liv'd unmolested in their Worship, till they had polluted it with Christian Blood, and their Derision and Profanation of the Cross of Christ had call'd for the Severity of the Laws. The Christian Emperors were so far from using Force to cause Men to profess themselves Christians, that ^u*Theodosius the Great* was the first who made it Criminal to apostatize to Heathenism. And during the Reigns of ^x*Jovian, Valentianian, Valens, and Gratian*, there were no Laws enacted

^r Theodos. cod. xvi. Tit. 7. l. iii. 4. Tit. 8. l. xiii.

^s Ib. l. viii. Jovian. 11. & Gothofred. ad l. 22.

^t Id. ib. ad l. xviii. & Socrat. l. vii. c. 16.

^u Theodos. Cod. xvi. Tit. 7. l. i.

^x Gothofred. ad Tit. 10. l. vii.

against Heathens or Heathen-Worship. And indeed there needed none. For about the Beginning of the Reign of *Valentinian* and *Valens*, A. D. CCCLXV. the Heathen were so few, and withal so mean generally, and inconsiderable, that they then began to be called *y Pagans*, and the Barbarous Nations bordering upon the Empire, to be stiled *Gentiles*. And in the time of ^z *Theodosius*, there were scarce any Pagans to be found. If therefore the Opposition made by the Jews and Heathen be an Objection to Christianity; this is certainly a Confirmation of the Truth of it, that all their Prejudice and Obstinacy was in so few Ages so generally overcome, by no other Force, but that of its Divine Truth and Excellency.



C H A P. XXXIII.

That the Confidence of Men of False Religions, and their Willingness to suffer for them, is no Prejudice to the Authority of the True Religion.

THE Christian Religion doth infinitely surpass all others in the Number of its Martyrs of both Sexes, of every Age and Nation, and Rank and Condition. Mistaken ignorant Zealots may often have suffer'd for other Religions, but Men of the highest Station and Worth, and inferiour to none in the Knowledge and Experience of every thing that the World esteems Excellent, have renounc'd all, and upon Choice, and after a full Consideration of the Merits of the Cause, have laid down their Lives for the sake of the Gospel. Tyrants of the greatest Power and

^y Id. in Tit. 10.^z Ib. l. xxii.

Cruelty have made it their Aim and Ambition, by all sorts of Tortures, to extirpate the Christian Religion; they esteem'd their Persecutions matter of Triumph, and a fit Subject for the ^a Inscriptions of Monuments erected to their Memories. And a ^b Collection was made by *Ulpian* of their Rescripts against the Christians, that they might be transmitted to Posterity. The Bishops of the chief Sees were used by the Emperors, as if they had been their most formidable Enemies. *St. Ignatius* was by *Trajan's* command in cruel Pomp conducted from *Antioch*, to *Rome*, there to be devoured by Wild Beasts; and *Cornelius* was in as much danger by being Bishop of *Rome*, as ^c if he had rival'd *Decius* in the Empire. But the invincible Patience and glorious Sufferings of the Christians prevail'd against all the Rage and Force of their Enemies. If the Martyrologies of all Religions were to be compar'd, there would soon appear so manifest a Difference between the Christian Martyrs, and the Sufferers for other Religions, that nothing would be needful to be said upon this Subject. But remembering with whom I have to deal, I am resolv'd to take every thing at the lowest, and argue with them upon their own Terms. Let us for a while set aside whatever of this nature might be said in preference of the Christian Martyrs, and suppose the Numbers and Zeal of the Martyrs (for so we must call them at present) of other Religions, to have been as great as can be imagin'd, yet the Cause it self makes a plain Difference between them.

An ignorant Zeal in a wrong Cause is no Argument against the Goodness of any Cause, which is main-

^a Gruter. Inscript. p. 238. 280.

^b Lactant. l. v. c. 11.

^c *Cum Tyrannus infestus sacerdotibus Dei fanda atque infanda comminaretur, cum multo patientius & tolerabilius audiret levare adversus se amulum principem, quam constitui Roma Dei sacerdotem.* Cypr. Epist. 55.

tain'd and promoted by such a Zeal as is reasonable, and proceeds upon sure Grounds. Indeed, it were very hard and very strange, if that which is true, should be ever the less certain, or the less to be regarded and esteem'd, because there may be other things that are false, of which some Men are as firmly persuaded, and are as much concern'd for them, as any one can be for the Truth it self. And yet this is the wisest thing that many have to pretend against the Certainty of the Religion, in which they were baptized, that there are many Impostures in the World, and none is without its Zealots to appear in Vindication of it. I am confident no Man ever parted with any thing, but his Religion, upon so weak a Pretence.

A false Religion is not the only thing for which Men are wont to have an undeserv'd Value; but their Country, their Friends, and themselves they are commonly as much mistaken in, and do as highly overprize: Is there then no real Difference, or solid worth in any of these? Some of the most unlikely Countries in the World have been admir'd by the Natives, as if they were the Garden of *Eden*, and the place of *Paradise*: Though there is nothing easier, than to make a Distinction concerning different Countries. And it is as easy to distinguish between the *Elysium* of the Heathens, or *Mahomet's Paradise*, and the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and between the Ways which lead to them. There is nothing, especially if it be of any Moment and Consequence to them, for which Men have not shewn themselves passionately concern'd; and it is not to be expected that they should be so much more infallible in Religion than in other things, or should be so much less in earnest about it, as not to discover the same Frailties, and the same Affections, which are visible in all the other Actions and Business of their Lives.

It is often seen in most Cases, that some are as earnest and zealous in a false Cause, as others are in a
True;

True; but doth this prove that there is no Difference between Falshood and Truth? When two Men of opposite Parties are equally confident of the Goodness of their Cause, it is certain that but one of them can be in the right; and it is as certain, that one of them must be, at least, so far in the right, as he contradicts the other; because, as the two parts of a Contradiction cannot be both True, so they cannot be both False. If then a confident and zealous Persuasion doth not determine Right and Wrong, True and False, the remaining Difficulty is, how to distinguish them, and that must be by the proper Evidence, and the intrinsic Goodness of the Cause.

Now our Evidence in behalf of our Religion, is plain matter of Fact; as the Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension of our Blessed Saviour, and the Miracles wrought by him and his Apostles. And if our Religion has sufficient Proof of what we assert in matter of Fact, and other Religions have not sufficient Proof of that Authority to which they lay claim, this must determine the Point, though a *Mahometan* or *Pagan* should be as zealous for his Religion, as a *Christian* can be. It is commonly and truly said, that it is not the Suffering, but the Cause, which makes the Martyr; and if Men of False Religions have never so much Confidence of the Truth of them, and have no Ground for it, this can be no Argument against the Grounds and Proofs upon which the Evidence of the Christian Religion depends. Other Religions may have their Zealots, who offer themselves to die for them, but the Christian Religion properly has the only Martyrs. For Martyrs are *Witnesses*, and no other Religion is capable of being attested in such a manner as the Christian Religion; no other Religion was ever propagated by Witnesses, who had seen and heard and been every way conversant in what they witness'd concerning the Principles of their Religion; no Religion besides was ever preach'd by Men, who, after

after an unalterable Constancy under all kinds of Sufferings, at last died for asserting it, when they must of necessity have known, whether it were true or false, and therefore certainly knew it to be true, or else they would never have suffer'd and died in that manner for it; no other Religion was ever attested from its first Propagation for several Hundreds of Years together, by Men who had either seen the first Preachers themselves, or had been acquainted with others who had seen them, or had wrought Miracles, and seen others work them; no other Religion is contain'd in Books, which were written at the first Propagation of it, and dispers'd into all Countries, in all Languages, amongst all sorts of Men, and especially amongst those who were most concern'd, and most able and desirous to disprove it, if it had been false; no Religion besides has by so weak and unlikely means prevail'd over all the Power and Policy of the World; none is in its Doctrine so agreeable to Reason, and so worthy of God for its Author; and none has been deliver'd down with so clear a continued and uninterrupted Testimony through all Ages, and convey'd by a Succession of Testimonies to this present Age: And therefore no other Religion can have Martyrs, who can die in confirmation of such a Testimony as this, or who can be Martyrs and Witnesses to it by assuring the World at their Death, that they have receiv'd the Religion thus testify'd and confirm'd, for which they die.

It is not the bare asserting a thing boldly, and then dying for it, which makes a Martyr, but the Qualifications necessary in a Witness are necessary in him, that is, that he should have all Opportunities needful to know the Truth, as well as no Temptation to speak the contrary. Which Qualifications were evident in the Apostles and first Martyrs, whose Testimony is that upon which the Proof of our Religion is founded, and the Martyrdoms of latter Ages are additional Testimonies, which without the former would be in-

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significant, but supposing them, are all the Testimony that can be given to any matter of Fact at this distance of Time, and are as much beyond the Sufferings in behalf of any other Religion, as the Evidence of the Christian Religion is beyond the Evidence for all others.

It is not merely Zeal, though it proceed even to Death and Martyrdom, upon which we build our Faith, but the Reasons which Christians have for their Zeal. Divers Nations have been as earnest Assertors of their fabulous Antiquities, as others can be of theirs, which are known to be true; but are these ever the less, or those ever the more true upon that account? We insist upon it, that we have Books to shew, and clear Evidence to produce for what we maintain, and these have been examin'd by many Men in every Age, and compar'd with what is to be alledg'd in behalf of contrary Religions, and Men of the greatest Learning, and Judgment, and Prudence, have chosen to die rather than to renounce this Religion for any other, after the nicest and most impartial Examination they could make. Whereas the Zealots and Martyrs for the Religions which are contrary to Christianity, must be acknowledg'd to be Men that understand nothing of Antiquity, but are ignorant of the History of their several Religions, and take all upon uncertain Report, and absurd Traditions, without any Proof or Possibility of it, and even against manifest Reason, and the Evidence of undoubted History.

So plain is it, that the Zeal and Confidence of Men of false Religions, and their willingness to die for them, can be no prejudice to the Authority and Certainty of the true Religion. The Enthusiasms and vain Notions and Conceits of some Zealots, can be no more a Prejudice to the Truth and Reality of our Religion, than it is an Argument against the Truth and Certainty of Humane Reason, that there are so many Fools and Madmen in the World.

C H A P. XXXIV.

That Differences in Matters of Religion, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Authority of it.

THERE is nothing which has proved a greater Snare and Scandal to weak Minds, nor which gives the Enemies of Religion greater Advantage, as they think, against it, than the Dissensions amongst Christians, and the different Sects and Parties into which they are divided. This makes some willing to conclude, that there is no certainty on any side, when they see equal Zeal and equal Confidence in Men of all Persuasions, that contend for their several Opinions.

But St. Paul writes to the *Corinthians*, that there must be not only Divisions, but Heresies also, and not only that they must be, but that they are not without their use and expediency in the Church; they are so far from being any real Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of Religion, that they do indeed conduce to manifest the Excellency of it, and the Sincerity of those that profess it. *For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you, 1 Cor. xi. 19.* From whence I shall shew, I. That Differences in Matters of Religion must be among Christians, unless God should miraculously and irresistibly interpose to prevent them. II. That it is not necessary, nor expedient, that God should thus interpose. III. That these Differences, how great and how many soever they be, even the worst of Schisms and Heresies, are no prejudice to the Truth and Authority of Religion.

I. That Differences in Matters of Religion must be among Christians, unless God should miraculously and irresistibly interpose to prevent them. *There must be also Heresies among you:* The miraculous Power and Demonstration of an infallible Spirit in the Apostles themselves,

selves, could not hinder the rise of them. *It must needs be, says our Saviour, that Offences come, or it is impossible but that Offences will come; but wo unto him through whom they come, Matth. xviii. 7. Luke xvii.*

The Church can by no means be free from Offences, Scandals and Divisions, unless God should forcibly restrain Men from running into them.

The Tempers and Capacities of Men are very different, and therefore in many cases they will make a different Judgment of Things. Much Attention and Thoughtfulness, and an exact Knowledge of Antiquity, is requisite to make a true Judgment in divers Controversies, and few Men are willing to be at that pains, which is necessary to inform themselves aright in lesser Difficulties; they are contented to take up with the Appearances of Things, which first offer themselves, or to which, by Custom and Education, they have been most used: There is so much Difficulty to get rid of Prejudices, so much Labour and Study is in many cases required in the search after Truth, that few can prevail with themselves to undergo it. Few Men examine the Ground of Things, and fewer do it to any Purpose; most Men follow, as they are led, without any farther Care, or Thought, and die in the Religion in which they were brought up, without much troubling themselves whether it be true or false, but taking all upon Trust: if they happen to be in the right, it is by chance, and more than they know, or are able to prove; if they be in the wrong, they follow the Example of others, of whom they have conceived a favourable Opinion, or who have some Authority with them to influence them; they profess their Religion, as they practise other things, for no better Reason, than because they see others have done it before them, and they stand up for it only, as they do for all Customs, which, by long use, are become familiar, and almost natural to them, but may be worn out by a different Practice and Custom. And

And when the generality of Men are thus careless and unconcerned to examine the Grounds and Principles of their several Religions, this gives a mighty Opportunity and Advantage to Men of ill Principles, and ill Designs, to infuse and spread their Opinions. For if by the Plausibleness and Importunity of their Insinuations, or by the Profession of a more than ordinary Zeal and Strictness in some things that are most popular, they can but gain a few Persons of Note and Interest, who may influence others, a Party is made, and a Sect set up, which may perhaps continue for some Generations; and a fondness for Novelty, a Personal Dislike and Prejudice against some Men, and an Esteem and Admiration of others, and several Accidents, as they fall in with the several Tempers and Inclinations of Men, may make great Additions to a Sect that is once formed. Men, who thought themselves disobliged amongst the *Jews*, were wont to go over to the *Samaritans*; and Deserters in Religion are as usual as in War, upon any great Discontent, or upon hopes of great Advantage. And these Men, to testify their Sincerity, are observed commonly to be most Violent; however, they serve to make a Number, and to strengthen a Party.

Most Schisms and Heresies have been begun by Men of ill Designs, who under pretences of Godliness, gratified their own Passions of Ambition, or Covetousness, or more scandalous Vices. This was the Original of the Heresies in the Apostles days, and it has been observable in the first Authors of them, ever since. An Affectation of Singularity, of Popular Fame, and Pre-eminence, hath been the occasion of great Mischiefs in the Church. Some Men are as fond of their own New Opinions, as others are of Honours, or Wealth, or Pleasure; and can bear no Contradiction, but contend for a kind of Empire in Knowledge, and shew a mighty Zeal to gain Profelytes, because this is to extend their Conquests, and enlarge their Dominion over Mens Faith.

Faith. Some that *devoured Widows Houses*, have for a *pretence made long Prayers*, Matth. xxiii. 14. And it is a *shame, and horror, even to speak of those things*, which have been done by others; not only *in secret*, but openly, and in the view of the World, under the most solemn and zealous Professions for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls. And the Errors of Men of no ill meaning, but of great Zeal, with little Knowledge, have sometimes found a strange Acceptance in the World, for the sake of that Integrity and Sincerity, which appeared in their first Authors.

Now when all the Passions, and Infirmities, and Vices of Men, thus contribute to produce and promote Differences in Religion, it is no greater wonder that there are such Differences, than that there are Frailties and Vices amongst Men; that some Men are vicious, and ready to seduce others, and that others are easie to be seduced.

St. Paul complains of *false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ*; and no marvel, says he, for *Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light*; therefore it is no great thing, if his Ministers also be transformed, as the Ministers of Righteousness, whose end shall be according to their Works, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15. Satan himself strives to appear like an Angel of Light, and Sin is forced to take the disguise of Religion. Vice is a thing, which few Men care much to own, how fond soever they be of it: Numbers in other cases are wont to bring things into Reputation, but it is not so in most Vices, which tho' they have been practised by great Numbers of Men in all Ages, yet have been always nevertheless infamous; and this shews the detestable Nature of Vice and Irreligion, that they could never become creditable in a vicious and irreligious World; but bad Men are ashamed of them, and endeavour to conceal and hide them under some colour of Religion and Vertue.

But since every Vice, and every Passion, and Interest of Men, may conduce to the raising and fomenting of

Differences in Religion, it is as impossible that they should not be in the World, as that Sin it self should not be in it, which can never be wholly prevented, unless God should force Men to be Good; and therefore it is impossible, that there should be no Differences in Religion, unless the same Force and Necessity should restrain Men from them.

II. It is not necessary, nor expedient, that God should miraculously and irresistibly interpose to prevent Differences in Matters of Religion; because it would contradict the very Design of all Religion, for God thus to interpose: The Design of Religion is to Direct and Command Men, what to Believe, and what to Do, upon such Terms as may prevail with them by reasonable Arguments; by Exhortations and Encouragements on the one hand, and Admonitions and Threatnings on the other. But to force Men to be of one Mind, and one Profession, would be to lay aside these Terms, and to render the Motives and Arguments which Religion proposeth useless, and to have no regard to the Rewards and Punishments by which it is enjoined. There can be no more Reason, that God should constrain Men to have right Notions of Religion, than that he should force them to obey those Notions, and put them in practice; or that he should restrain Men from Heresies and Schisms; that is, from such Sins as more directly and immediately concern Religion, rather than from any other Sins: But there is great reason why it should not be so, because this would make Religion it self useless and insignificant, by taking away the Grounds and Foundations of all Religion, and by destroying the Liberty of Mankind, which is necessary in all Acts of Religion. For, he that Acts by Necessity, cannot Act by the Principles of Religion, which advises and commands Men to *refuse the Evil, and chuse the Good*. Differences in Religion could not be prevented without over-ruling all the Passions, and hindering all the Vices of Men, and without

out frustrating the Commands and Precepts, and contradicting the Design and Institution of Religion; and it is not to be expected, that rather than suffer Differences in Religion, God should so check and restrain Men, as not to leave them at Liberty to act upon the Principles of Religion, but upon mere Force and Necessity. If Men be permitted to Err and to Sin, they will Err and Sin in Matters relating to Religion, as well as in others, and to debar Men unavoidably from Sin and Error, would be to proceed in such a manner as is inconsistent with the Motives and Arguments both of Reason and Religion, and to offer Violence, not only to Humane Nature, but to the Wisdom and Counsel of God, in his Dispensations for the Salvation of Mankind.

It is the Wisdom of God not to force Men upon doing Good, but to bring Good out of Evil, and if Men will resolve to commit Sin, and will not be prevailed upon by all that God has said and done, to withdraw them from it; then to make their worst Actions instrumental to his own Glory, and to the Salvation of other Men. And there is this good effect from the most pernicious Heresies and Schisms, *That those which are approved, may be made manifest by them; that the Sincerity of the good Christian may appear, and that the Disguise may be taken off from Hypocrites, that they may be no longer able to seduce Men by a shew of Godliness.* It is a just Judgment of God upon unrepenting Sinners, *to let them fall from one Wickedness to another, and not come into his Righteousness; to punish secret Sins, by suffering Men to run into publick and notorious Crimes, whereby they discover and expose themselves to the World.* Thus it was in the case of those Hereticks of whom St. Paul speaks, *They profess'd that they knew God, but in Works they denied him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate,* Tit. i. 16. And giving a full and lamentable Description of this sort of Men, in conclusion he says, *But they shall proceed no farther; for their Folly shall be ma-*

nifest to all Men, 2 Tim. iii. 9. They were permitted to come to such horrid and frightful degrees of Wickedness and Blasphemy, as that all Men, who meant well, would be sure to avoid them, and to depart from them; and of those who joined themselves with such Men, and went over to them, St. John declares, *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us*, 1 John ii. 19.

And when these, and such like Heresies break loose, and disturb the Peace of the Church, this makes all sincere Christians more careful and diligent to *hold fast the form of sound Words, and earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*. Men are apt to be too careless and unconcerned about Religion, when they meet with no Opposition: But when the Faith is denied, and the Terms of Salvation are disputed against, this will stir up and actuate a mighty Zeal in all, who have any regard for the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Men. From whence it comes to pass, that most Heresies have been of no long continuance, but appear and shew themselves, are disproved, become odious, and after a while are hardly known, but from the Books of such as confuted them; and those Points of Doctrine which were contradicted, become so much the better established, and the more firmly believed for the future. Heresies are but the Tryals of Religion, as Dangers are of Courage; it tends to the Honour and Evidence of Truth, to be exercised and encompassed with Errors, which fall before it, and are able to do it no hurt.

So that Differences in Religion are suffered by Almighty God, as all other Sins are, because it is the design of Religion, not to compel Men, but to persuade and exhort them, and to permit them to be guilty of all manner of Sin, whilst it offers the most prevailing Arguments and Motives against it; and to be guilty of

Schisms and Heresies amongst the rest: And these are Temptations and Tryals to good Men, and often serve as Judgments upon the wicked, to punish one Wickedness with another, and expose them to the World for Hypocrites and Impostors. And they serve to confirm the Articles of our Faith, which hereby become the more thoroughly examined, and the more fully explained. And these are sufficient Reasons why God should not, by his Almighty Power, hinder those Differences in Religion, which must of necessity happen by the Sins and Folly of Men, unless he should miraculously and irresistibly interpose to prevent them.

III. These Differences, how great and how many soever they may be, even the worst of Schisms and Heresies, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of Religion. Religion is our Direction, our Way to Heaven and Happiness; but will any Man say, that because there are many wrong Ways, therefore there is none right? This is beneath the Discretion of every ordinary Traveller, who, if the Way be difficult, resolves to use the more Care and Diligence in finding it out, but never concludes with himself that there is no such Way, and no such Place as that to which he intends to go. For a Man to argue from the Multitude of Heresies and Schisms against the Truth of Religion, is as if he would prove, that because there are so many *Curve* Lines, therefore there can be none *Right*; when for this very Reason we must conclude, that there is such a thing as Streightness, or else there could be nothing Crooked; for we can have no Notion of one without the other. And as all Obliquity supposes Rectitude, from which it declines, so Vice supposes Virtue, and Error supposes Truth, and Error in Religion must suppose Truth in Religion. For whatever is contrary to any thing, necessarily implies the Being of that to which it is contrary; and that which is not, can have nothing contrary to it. Nothing is more certain than it is, that if there were

no Virtue, there could be no Vice; if no Truth, there could be no Error, and unless there were Truth and Excellency in Religion, it were impossible that there should be any such thing as Heresy or Schism, which are other Words for Error and Vice in matters of Religion. And it hath been already observ'd, that the worst Heresies give an occasion to the clearing those Points of Religion which are disputed against, and so must be far from invalidating the Truth of it.

But because these are things which some will not understand, or may be unwilling to acknowledge; and it is generally look'd upon as a sure Argument of the Weakness of any Cause, when those that maintain it are not agreed about it amongst themselves; let us consider, 1. That all Parties are agreed in the Truth of Religion in general, and of the Christian Religion in particular: 2. That there is nothing besides, in which Men have not disagreed, as well as in matters of Religion.

1. All Parties are agreed in the Truth of Religion in general. Even Hypocrites and Impostors so far own Religion, as to believe that it is worth the counterfeiting. For no Man counterfeits that which is not, no, nor that which has no Worth nor Excellency in it. No Man will be at much pains to be thought an Atheist, or an Infidel, who is not such; and no Man will endeavour to be thought vicious, unless he be so indeed. There are few Pretenders to the Shame and Infamy which in all Ages have been inseparable from Irreligion; but it is the natural Sense which Men have of Religion, that gives it so great Credit and Honour in a wicked World, that even the Shadow and Counterfeit of it has sometimes too much prevail'd.

But farther, all Sects and Parties of Christians are agreed in the Truth of the Christian Religion, and the only Difference amongst them is concerning particular Doctrines and Opinions, that is, concerning the true Meaning and Explication of it: And no Man
disputes

disputes about the Meaning of that which he does not at the same time suppose to be. When any Point or Clause of a Law is in Dispute, it would be ridiculous from thence to conclude, that no such Law was ever made; because all Parties must agree that there is such a Law, or else there could be no Dispute about it. And when Differences arise in Religion, it is an Argument for the Truth of Religion, because there can be no Difference about nothing, and Men would never differ about Religion, if it were not true, or they did not think it to be so.

But Christians are not only agreed in the main that the Gospel is true, but they are likewise agreed in the Sense and Meaning of it, as to the Fundamental Articles necessary to Salvation. This was the ancient Rule and Measure laid down by *Vincentinus Lirinensis*, of the Catholick Doctrine necessary to be believ'd, that it had been believ'd in all Ages, in all Places, and in all Churches. And the Excellent Archbishop *Usher*, whose Judgment in the Case may safely be rely'd upon, has^d declar'd, That if at this day we should take a Survey of the severall^e Professions of Christianity, that have any large Spread in any part of the World (as of the Religion of the Roman and the Reform'd Churches in our Quarters, of the Ægyptians and Æthiopians in the South, of the Grecians and other Christians in the Eastern Parts) and should put by the Points wherein they differ from one another, and gather into one Body the rest of the Articles, wherein they all did generally agree; we should find, that in those Propositions, which without all Controversie are so universally receiv'd in the whole Christian World, so much Truth is contain'd, as being join'd with holy Obedience, may be sufficient to bring a Man unto everlasting Salvation. Nei-

^d Brief Declaration of the Universality of the Church of Christ, and the Unity of the Catholick Faith professed therein, delivered in a Sermon before the King, the 20th of June, 1624.

^e This Passage was produced by Dr. Potter, and defended by Mr. Chillingworth, Chap. iv. §. 44, &c.

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ther have we cause to doubt but that as many as do walk according to this Rule, (neither overthrowing that which they have built, by sup^rnducing any damnable Heresies thereupon, nor otherwise vitiating their Holy Faith with a lewd and wicked conversation) Peace shall be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. And he afterwards says, in relation to the Papists in Ireland, that he had sometimes treated with those of the Opposite Party, and mov'd them, that howsoever in other things we did differ one from another, yet we should join together in teaching those main Points, the knowledge whereof was so necessary unto Salvation, and of the Truth whereof there was no Controversy betwixt us.

And as to particular Controversies, tho' one would imagine that wise Men of all others should be least apt to fall out about Words; yet it is an old Observation, that when learned and wise Men disagree in Opinion, the Difference is commonly in the manner of expressing themselves; or however it is generally about the Manner of the Existence, not about the Existence it self, of Things. Thus, what is better known by all than the Sun? and yet what Disputes have there been and ever will be, concerning its Light, and Motion, and Distance, and Dimensions?

But it ought likewise to be consider'd, that in the Management of the Controversies in Religion, such as are otherwise good Men, are wont many times to be little favourable in representing the Opinions of their Adversaries; and if Men might be allow'd to explain themselves, and were not provok'd and exasperated beyond their own calmer Thoughts and Temper, the Differences in Religion would not be near so great, nor so many, as they now appear to be. It so happens in all Cases, that Differences are widen'd by eager and contentious Debates; Men speak more than they design'd, and then resolve to defend what they have said, so that Disputes become endless, and are drawn out into Particulars without number, which
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were never at first thought of. Many Books of Controversy are half taken up in asking cross Questions, which perhaps neither of the Parties can answer to satisfaction, nor do they often seem to design any thing farther, than to puzzle one another, and to be as capitious and as troublesom as they can. But this ought not to be imputed to the Uncertainty of the Subject, but to the Perverseness of Men; and those, who upon every occasion fall into so great Heats and Contentions, must needs be very well assured of that, in which they agree, that is, of the Truth of Religion in general, and of the Christian Religion in particular, as to the Fundamental Points of it. The Differences among Christians may serve to prove to us the Divine Authority of our Religion, and of the Scriptures, which contain it, since Christians agree in asserting their Divine Authority, and have never been so much at Unity among themselves, as to be able to agree to corrupt them, but have certainly deliver'd them down entire to us.

2. It is not Religion only, which Men dispute about, but there is nothing besides, in which they have not disagreed. It is observ'd, that Want of Experience and Knowledge of the World, leads Men into more Inconveniencies, than Want of Parts and Abilities. And it is as certain, that a thorough Knowledge of the Debates and Contentions in Philosophy, would sooner cure most Men of their Infidelity, than any Arguments could do. Those who raise Objections against Religion, if they would but consider, that almost every thing else has as great Difficulties, would be ashamed to reject Religion upon Pretences, which, if they hold, must force them to reject all other things with it, and to believe just nothing at all. There have been Disputes in all Ages concerning Light and Motion, the Winds and Seas, and other Wonders of Nature, but it would be absurd, for this Reason, to question, whether there be any such thing as Light
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and Motion, and whatever besides Men have disputed about. And yet it is more absurd, if it be possible, to allow that this is a good Argument against Religion, but against nothing else. If the Sun yield his Light, and Nature go on in her constant Course, tho' Men differ never so much in their Philosophy about it, what can Religion be the worse for their Disputes? No body thinks, that he sees ever the less for any Difficulties, which have been urg'd concerning Vision; and why should we be ever the less inclined to believe the Truth of Religion, by reason of any Controversies in it? Men may dispute any thing, and there is hardly any thing but it has been disputed; but nothing is the less credible for being disputed, unless it can be disprov'd, but is rather confirm'd and advanc'd by it. Truth is never the less Truth for meeting with Opposition, but is the more try'd, and the more approv'd, as Strength and Courage is by the sharpest Conflicts.

Since then there will be Vices, as long as there are Men in this World, and Differences and Dissensions in Religion, as long as there are Vices; since they cannot be hinder'd, but by the Omnipotent Power of God, and there are great Reasons, why he should not interpose to prevent them; since Differences in Religion are so far from implying any Uncertainty in Religion, that they rather prove a Confirmation of it, and are in divers respects made useful and expedient to the Edification of Christians, it must be great Inconsideration and Weakness, to produce them as an Objection against Religion.

There must be Heresies, and the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils, speaking Lies in Hypocrisy, having their Conscience sear'd with an hot Iron, 1 Tim. iv. 12. The Scripture could not be true, unless these things should happen, which are foretold in several places of Scripture.

Behold, says our Saviour, I have told you before, Matt.

xxiv. 25. it ought to be no new nor surprizing thing to Christians, to see Heresies arise, though they be never so wicked and abominable; because we are forewarn'd to expect them, and they serve to give a kind of Testimony to the True Religion, in fulfilling the Predictions of it. They help to prove the Religion, which they would destroy: For if there had been no Heresies, that Religion could not be True, which has foretold them; but since there are Heresies, our Religion is at least so far true, as to contain expresse Prophecies concerning them, which we see daily fulfill'd; and as they evidently prove our Religion true in this particular, so they invalidate it in no other. Which is the Answer that the Christians anciently return'd to the Enemies of Religion, when they made this *Objection* against it.

Let us follow the plain, the known, and confess'd Duties of Religion; Humility, Temperance, Righteousness, and Charity; and when once we have no Temptations to wish Religion untrue, upon the account of the plain Precepts and Directions of it, we shall never suspect it to be so, by reason of any Controversies in it. For if Men will impartially consider things; that Religion which has now for so many Ages stood out all the Assaults and Attempts, which Enemies from without, and Parties within, could make against it, has approv'd it self much better and more gloriously, than it could have done, if there never had been either Heresies or Schisms. *Let us therefore hold fast the Profession of our Faith without Wavering*, being assured, that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, all the Power and Stratagems of Satan, shall never be able to prevail against the Church of Christ, but shall only serve to add to its Victories, and adorn its Triumphs. The Malice, O Lord, and Fierceness of Man shall turn to thy Praise: And the Fierceness of them shalt thou refrain, Psal. lxxvi. 10.

^c Justin. Martyr. Dial.

C H A P. XXXV.

Though all Objections could not be answer'd, yet this would be no just Cause to reject the Authority of the Scriptures.

ALL Objections, which can with any Colour or Pretence be alledg'd, have been consider'd, and answer'd, by divers Men of great Learning and Judgment; and several Objections, which have made most noise in the World, as that about the Capacity of the Ark, and others, have been demonstrated to be groundless and frivolous. But though all Difficulties could not be accounted for, yet this would be no just or sufficient Cause, why we should reject the Scriptures; because Objections for the most part are impertinent to the purpose for which they were design'd, and do not at all affect the Evidence which is brought in proof of the Scriptures; and if they were pertinent, yet unless they could confute that Evidence, they ought not to determine us against them.

He that with an honest and sincere Desire to find out the Truth or Falshood of a Revelation, enquires into it, should first consider impartially what can be alledg'd for it, and afterwards consider the Objections rais'd against it, that so he may compare the Arguments in proof of it, and the Objections together, and determine himself on that side, which appears to have most Reason for it. But to insist upon particular Objections, collected out of difficult Places of Scripture, (though they would likewise observe the Answers, that have been given, which few of our Objectors have patience to do, but run away with the Objection without staying for an Answer) I say, to alledge particular Objections, without attending to the main Grounds and Motives, which induce a Belief of the

Truth

Truth of the Scriptures, is a very deceitful way of Arguing: Because it is not in the least improbable, that there may be a true Revelation, which may have great Difficulties in it. But if sufficient Evidence be produced to convince us, that the Scriptures are indeed God's Word, and there be no proof on the contrary to invalidate that Evidence; then all the Objections besides, that can be raised, are but Objections, and no more. For if those Arguments, by which our Religion appears to be True, remain still in their full Force, notwithstanding the Objections, and no positive and direct Proof be brought, that they are insufficient, we ought not to reject those Arguments, and the Conclusions deduced from them upon the Account of the Objections, but to reject the Objections for the sake of those Arguments; because if those cannot be disproved, all the Objections, which can be thought of, must proceed from some Mistake. For when I am once assured of the Truth of a thing, by direct and positive Proof, I have the same assurance, that all Objections against it must be vain and false, which I have, that that thing is true; because every thing must be false, which is opposite to Truth, and nothing but that which takes off the Arguments, by which any thing is proved to be True, can ever prove it false: But all Objections must be false themselves, or insignificant to the Purpose for which they are alledged, if the Evidence for the Truth of that, against which they are brought, cannot be disproved, that is, if the Thing, against which they are brought, be True.

To shew this in Particulars. If a Man muster up never so many Inconsistencies, as he thinks, in the Scriptures, yet unless he be as well assured, at least, that these which he calls Inconsistencies, cannot be in any Book of Divine Revelation; as he may be, that the Scriptures are of Divine Revelation, he cannot in Reason reject their Authority. And to be assured of
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this, it must be considered, what is inconsistent with the Evidence whereby the Authority of the Scriptures is proved to us: For whatever is not inconsistent with this Evidence, cannot be inconsistent with their Authority. In like manner, as if a Man should frame never so many Objections against the Opinion commonly received, that *Cæsar* himself wrote the *Commentaries* which go under his Name, and not *Julius Cæsar*, or any other Author; unless he can overthrow the Evidence by which *Cæsar* appears to be the Author of them, all his Objections will never amount to a Proof, that he was not the Author. If *Archimedes* or *Euclide* had used improper Language or Solecisms, would their Demonstrations have had the less Weight with those, by whom they had been understood? Or, if they had subjoined an Historical Account of the Discovery and Progress of the Mathematicks, and had made Mistakes in the Historical Part, would the Demonstrative Part have been the less Demonstration? And does not that Man make himself ridiculous, who, with *Epicurus* and *Hobbes*, pretends by Reason to overthrow Mathematical *Axioms* and *Theorems*, which he cannot understand? Upon the same grounds, if the Substance of what the Apostles deliver be true, it will be never the less Truth, tho' the Expression were not always proper, and the Circumstances of Time and Place in things left material had been mistaken, and many things should be written which are *hard to be understood*.

It is very possible for God to reveal things, which we may not be able to comprehend; and to enact Laws, especially concerning the Rites and Ceremonies enjoined a People so many Ages past, the Reasons whereof we may not be able fully to understand; and it is very possible likewise, that there may be great Difficulties in Chronology, and that the Text may in divers places have a different Reading: And tho' all these things have been cleared, to the satisfaction

of reasonable Men, by several Expositors, yet let us suppose at present, to gratifie these Objectors, (and this will gratifie them, if any thing can do it,) that the Laws are utterly unaccountable, that the Difficulties in Chronology are no way to be adjusted, that the divers Readings are by no means to be reconciled; yet what doth all this prove? That *Moses* wrought no Miracles? That the Children of *Israel* and the *Ægyptians* were not Witnesses to them? That what the Prophets foretold did not come to pass? That our Saviour never rose from the Dead, and that the Holy Ghost did not descend upon the Apostles? Or, that any thing is contained in the Scriptures repugnant to the Divine Attributes, or to the natural Notions of Good and Evil? Doth it prove any thing of all this? or can it be pretended to prove it? If it cannot, (and nothing is more plain than that it cannot,) then all the Evidence produced in proof of the Authority of the Scriptures stands firm, notwithstanding all this mighty noise of the Obscurity, and the Inconsistency, and the Uncertainty of the Text of the Scriptures. And the next enquiry naturally will be, not how the Scriptures can be from God, if these things be to be found in them, (for it is already proved that they are from God, and therefore this must from henceforth be taken for granted, till it can be disproved,) but the only Enquiry will be, how these Passages are to be explained, or reconciled with other Places.

For let us consider this way of Reasoning, which is made use of to disprove the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures in other things, and try whether we are wont to reason thus in any case, but that of Religion, and whether we should not be ashamed of this way of arguing in any other case. How little is it that we thoroughly understand in natural Things, and yet how seldom do we doubt of the Truth and Reality of them, because we may puzzle and perplex ourselves in the Explication of them? For instance, we discern

discern the Light, and feel the Warmth and Heat of the Sun, and have the Experience of the constant returns of Day and Night, and of the several Seasons of the Year; and no Man doubts but that all this is effected by the approach or withdrawing of the Sun's Influence: But whoever will go about to explain all this, and to give a particular Account of it, will find it a very hard Task; and such Objections have been urged against every Hypothesis in some Point or other, as perhaps no Man is able fully to answer. But doth any Man doubt, whether there be such a thing as Light and Heat, as Day and Night, though he cannot be satisfied whether the Sun or the Earth move? Or do Men doubt, whether they can see or not, till they can demonstrate how Vision is made? And must none be allowed to see but Mathematicians? Or do Men refuse to eat, till they are satisfied how, and after what manner they are nourished? Yet if we must be swayed by Objections, which do not come up to the main Point, nor affect the Truth and Reality of Things, but only fill our Minds with Scruples and Difficulties about them, we must believe nothing which we do not fully comprehend in every part and circumstance of it. For whatever we are ignorant of concerning it, that may, it seems, be objected against the thing it self, and may be a just Reason why we should doubt of it. We must have a care of being too confident, that we move before we can give an exact account of the Cause and Laws of Motion, which the greatest Philosophers have not been able to do; we must not presume to eat, till we can tell how Digestion and Nourishment are made. In short, this would run us into all the Extravagancies of Scepticism: For upon these Principles it was, that some doubted whether Snow be white, or Honey sweet, or any thing else be of the same Colour or Taste, of which it appears to be, because they could amuse themselves with Difficulties, and they were too much Philosophers

losophers to assent to any thing that they did not understand, tho' it were confirmed by the Sense and Experience of all Mankind. They were rational Men, and it was below them to believe their Senses, unless their Reason were convinced, and that was too acute to be convinced, as long as any Difficulty, that could be started, remained unanswered. And thus, under the pretence of Reason and Philosophy, they exposed themselves to the Scorn and Derision of all who had but the common Sense of Men, without the Art and Subtilty of imposing upon themselves and others.

And it is the same thing in effect, as to Matters of Religion. The Scriptures come confirmed down to us by all the ways of confirmation, that the Authority of any Revelation at this distance of time could be expected to have, if it really were what we believe the Scriptures to be. Why then do some Men doubt whether they be Authentick? Can they disprove the Arguments which are brought in defence of them? Can they produce any other Revelation more Authentick? Or, is it more reasonable to believe that God should not reveal himself to Mankind, than that this Revelation should be his? No; this is not the case: but there are several things to be found in the Scriptures, which they think would not be in them, if they were of Divine Revelation. But a wise Man will never disbelieve a thing for any Objections made against it, which do not reach the Point, nor touch those Arguments, by which it is proved to him. It is not inconsistent, that that may be most true, which may have many Exceptions framed against it; but it is absurd to reject that as incredible, which comes recommended to our Belief by such Evidence as cannot be disprov'd. Till this be done, all which can be said besides, only shews, that there are Difficulties to be met withal in the Scriptures, which was never denied by those, who most firmly and stedfastly believe them.

But Difficulties can never alter the nature of Things, and make that which is true to become false. There is no Science without its Difficulties, and it is not pretended that Theology is without them. There are many great and inexplicable Difficulties in the Mathematicks; but shall we therefore reject this as a Science of no value nor certainty, and believe no Demonstration in *Euclide* to be true, unless we could square the Circle? And yet this is every whit as reasonable, as it is, not to acknowledge the Truth of the Scriptures, unless we could explain all the Visions in *Ezekiel*, and the *Revelations* of St. *John*. We must believe nothing, and know nothing, if we must disbelieve and reject every thing which is liable to Difficulties. We must not believe we have a Soul, unless we can give an account of all its Operations; nor that we have a Body, unless we can tell all the Parts and Motions, and the whole Frame and Composition of it. We must not believe our Senses, till there is nothing relating to Sensation but what we perfectly understand; nor that there are any Objects in the World, till we know the exact manner how we perceive them, and can solve all Objections that may be raised concerning them. And if a Man can be incredulous to this degree, it cannot be expected that he should believe the Scriptures: But till he is come to this height of Folly and Stupidity, if he will be consistent with himself, and true to those Principles of Reason, from which he argues in all other cases, he cannot reject the Authority of the Scriptures upon the account of any Difficulties that he finds in them, whilst the Arguments by which they are proved to be of Divine Authority, remain unanswered. And all the Objections, which can be invented against the Scriptures, cannot seem near so absurd to a considering Man, as to suppose that God should not at all reveal himself to Mankind; or that the Heathen Oracles, or *Mahomet's Alcoran*, should be of Divine Revelation.

C H A P. XXXVI.

The Conclusion; containing an Exhortation to a serious Consideration of these things, both from the Example of the wisest and most learned Men, and from the infinite Importance of the Things themselves.

AS Wise and as Learned Men as any that ever lived in the World, have died in the Belief of the Christian Religion, when they had no Interest to engage them to it; and many of them have led their Lives under Persecutions, and have at last been put to Death, rather than they would renounce that Faith which the Scriptures declare to us. It cannot be denied, but that there have been Men of as great Learning, and as great Numbers of them, professing the Christian Religion, as have been of all other Religions in the World: Indeed, all manner of Arts and Sciences have been more improved by Christians, than by all other sorts of Men whatsoever; and all rational and solid Learning is confined, as I may say, within Christendom. For, besides the Idolatrous Worship, and other Impieties notorious among them; whatsoever Learning is to be found among the *Chinese*, or other Heathen Nations, their Notions of Things, so far as they differ from what is contained in the Scriptures, are so obscure and confused at the best, and so groundless, that that Christian must be very weary of his Religion, who can think of changing it for such Uncertainties.

And no Man that profess'd and called himself a Christian, ever disbelieved the Scriptures, but there were visibly other Reasons for it than these, which the Nature of the Christian Religion could afford: It

was apparent in his Life, that he wished the Christian Religion were false, before he endeavoured to persuade himself that it is not true. Some are possess'd with that intolerable Spirit of Pride and Contradiction, that mere Vanity and a Conceit of being wiser than others, makes them find fault with any thing that is generally received; and the greatest Fault which these Men can find with the Christian Religion, is, that they have been bred up in it, and therefore they make heavy Complaints of the prejudices of Education, and the hindrances which ingenuous Minds labour under, from the influences of it, in the pursuit of Truth: And these Men, perhaps, might have talk'd as much, and to as much purpose, for Christianity, as they now talk against it, if they had not been born among Christians, and been bred up in the Christian Religion; they scorn to be the better for their Education, and are ashamed of nothing more than to believe and think like other Men; and they might almost be persuaded to be Christians still, if they could but be singular in being so: For the mere Affectation of Singularity makes them despise and dispute against any thing which others allow and esteem. But it will be hard to find any learned Man of tolerable Modesty and Vertue, and who was not as singular in other things, as in his Notions of Religion, but he has firmly believed the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.

It concerns all, who have any Doubts about these things, to weigh the Objections with the Answers that have been given to them by divers Authors, and withal to observe the importance of the Objections, and how far they affect the main Cause; and still to remember, that it is at every Man's own Peril, if he make a rash and partial Judgment. If our Faith could be of no Benefit or Advantage to us, nor Infidelity any Prejudice, we might take the same Liberty to give Credit or no Credit to what we read in the Bible, that

that we use in the Reading all other Books, and to receive or reject it as we think fit, or to believe only just so much, as lies even with our own Understandings and Notions of Things, and at the worst this would be but Folly in us. But it is Madness to reject our own Happiness, and make our selves miserable, because we do not perceive the Reasons of all the Means and Methods, which God has been pleas'd to use to make us happy; or are not able to understand every Word of that Book, which contains the Terms of our Salvation.

This is as if a Son should choose to live miserably, rather than to enjoy a large Estate left him by his Father, because he doth not perceive the Design and full Meaning of every Particular in his Will; he searches out for all Ways and Arts of cavilling at it, and is fond of any Pretence to cast it aside as Counterfeit, being resolv'd never to believe it to be his Father's: For his Father was a wise Man, and if it were his, such and such Clauses would not be in it, since there is no reason, that he can see, why they should be inserted; several things mention'd in it, he believes are mistimed, the Bounds of the Lands are not described by fit Names; besides it is interlin'd, and he never will accept of such an Estate convey'd to him by such a Will; but chooses rather to be miserable all the days of his Life. This would be such Peevishness and Perverseness, as is not to be met withal, where our Temporal Interest is concern'd: But too many are too forward to reject the Tenders, and despise the Terms of an everlasting Inheritance in Heaven, though at the same time they become obnoxious to all the Curses threatned to Unbelievers, because the Old and New Testament contain some things which may afford matter of Exception and Cavil to captious Men.

God has sent his Prophets to call, and admonish us, and his Son to reconcile us to himself, by his Death; and to offer us Eternal Peace and
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Happiness, and he has given us all the Evidence of it, that the nature of the things would admit. The *Jews* have asserted the Authority of the Old Testament from the times of *Moses* and the Prophets; and the Christians asserted the Truth of the Gospel, when it was impossible for them not to know whether it were true or not; without any prospect of Advantage by it in this World; but with a certain Expectation of all manner of Torments and Deaths; and the greatest part of the known World, was converted to the Belief of it, and became Christians; when in this World, Christians were of *all Men the most miserable*, and were supported only by the steadfast hope and expectation of that Happiness which is promis'd to us in the Scriptures after this Life. And all things consider'd, we have as sufficient grounds for the Authority of the Scriptures, as we have, not only that any other Book was compos'd by the Author, whose Name it bears, but as we have to believe any thing else in the World. Now what do these Men? How do they receive so great a Blessing? Why, they overlook all the Evidence that can be brought to prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and search up and down for doubtful and obscure Passages to disprove it by; not considering, in the mean time, that nothing can overthrow their Authority, but that which can invalidate the Evidence, by which it is establish'd. It would be the highest Folly and Ingratitude thus to despise God's Mercy and Care over us, if there were no Danger in it, but it being a thing of infinite Danger, it is no less than Madness: For what milder Term can be found to express the desperate Folly of them, who reject a Book, which sets before us the means of Salvation, but at the same time forewarns us upon pain of the severest effects of God's Displeasure, not to neglect them: It is Madness, I say, if we rightly consider it, to reject such a Book, and at once both to affront the Mercy, and despise the Threat-

nings of the infinitely Merciful, and the infinitely Great and Powerful God.

It is a good Caution to the Atheist to forbear his Blasphemies, and Contempt of the Divine Majesty, for fear it should prove true, that there is a God, at last, and then it will be a dismal thing after all his profane Talking and Arguing, to be call'd before that God, whom he so often deny'd. And it is as good Advice to those, who make it their Business to find fault with the Scriptures, to consider seriously whether they are sure that these are not God's Word, after all that can be said against them; and if they be not absolutely certain of this, the Name and Title, which they bear, and which Men as wise and as judicious as themselves, have ever thought to belong to them, should methinks keep Men within some bounds of Modesty and Discretion. For if they be indeed the Word of God, (and nothing is capable of being made more evident) then how dearly must they pay for a little cavilling Wit and Subtilty! The best and most Divine things may be despis'd and affronted by a bold and scurrilous Wit: but can Men think it a safe or a prudent thing to ridicule and scoff at those Books, which, for ought they know, may be of Divine Revelation, when all the Reason, of which they fancy themselves so great Masters, can never be able to confute the Arguments brought in Vindication of them? Can they value the contemptible Reputation of a little Satyr and Drollery, at that mighty Rate, as to run the Hazard of being damn'd for it?

If Men have any real Doubts or Scruples, they must needs grant, that it is too serious a thing to jest and trifle withal, when no less than the Terms of our everlasting Happiness, or everlasting Misery is the thing in Controversy. And what Wit there may be in it, I cannot tell; but I am sure it is no Sign of a very wise Man to speak contemptibly of a Book, which he can never prove, he must not be judg'd by at the
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last Day. *As a Mad-man, says Solomon, who casteth Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death; so is the Man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and saith, Am not I in Sport? Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. But what Description or Comparison can be found equal to his Madness, who deceiveth and destroyeth himself, and that eternally, and yet says, Am not I in Sport? Is not this the very Perfection of Wit and Raillery?*

Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker, Isai. xlv. 9. Do they provoke me to Anger, saith the Lord, do they not provoke themselves to the Confusion of their own Faces? Jer. vii. 19. And thou shalt know, that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy Blasphemies. Thus with your Mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your Words against me, I have heard them, Ezek. xxxv. 12, 13. Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy, are we stronger than he? 1 Cor. x. 22.

There shall come in the last days Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts, 2 Pet. iii. 3. But, beloved, remember ye the Words, which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you, there should be Mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly Lusts, Jude 17, 18. If all that I have discours'd be insufficient to convince these Men, yet let their own Arguments, and even their own Blasphemies convince them; for the very worst that they can say or do, serves to fulfil the Prophecies, and confirm the Authority of the Holy Scriptures.



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